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"SHEBA."

A STUDY OF GIRLHOOD.

By "RITA,"

AUTHOR OF "DAME DURDEN," "DARBY AND JOAN," "THE LADY NANCY,"  
"GRETCHEN," ETC., ETC.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE UNWISDOM OF THOUGHT.

THE opera was over late that night, and Meredith returned somewhat fatigued; Müller had not waited for him, and he found him on his return smoking and busied with those eternal MSS. that were one day to startle the world of music into recognition of an entirely original genius.

He looked up as the young man entered. "Tired?" he said. "Ah, I see—you need not speak. There is your supper there. The child put it all right for you . . . and there is the wine . . . our good friend Niersteiner; he will rouse your spirits."

Meredith threw himself into the chair placed carefully beside the little table on which his evening meal was laid out—but though he drank off a glass of the clear golden wine, he ate nothing.

"*Was ist?*" asked the old German presently; "you are not yourself, *mein lieber*."

"I am only tired," said Paul; "the music is ringing in my head. Somehow, whenever I sing 'The Prophet' I think of Sheba Ormatroyd."

"It is not wise to think of any woman twice," said old Müller, glancing up from those lines of notes. "For why? You think twice, and if you think twice you think again—and the oftener you think, the worse it is for you. That is so—*nicht wahr?*"

"I suppose it is," the young man answered wearily. "Was she here to-day?"

"Of course . . . the rain kept her from her walk, so she sat here with me and we talked."

"I suppose," said Paul, "you mean you talked, and she listened."

"She is a good listener," said Müller smiling. "I am afraid I frightened her a little. She will have much to think of—but then, her mind is active—she *can* think."

"I hope," said Paul, looking at him suddenly, "you have not been mystifying and perplexing her brains as you used to do mine."

"I have given her an opportunity of using them on a new subject. What will result I cannot presume to say . . . there are some wise folks in the world, you know, who have deemed it is best for man to accept what his reason cannot explain, lest his mind, being exercised, should lead him astray. Truth should always be veiled, because mortal eyes cannot bear its glory. The mind should not question or doubt, because both are sinful and may end in complete confusion. Yea, even the very questioning of that Beginning which has been so satisfactorily established, and that Being who has been filtered through the mind and imaginings of man until His likeness is lost in a weak conception, based on superstition and childish belief, is not permissible."

"Did you tell her this?" asked Paul, growing interested despite his weariness.

"Yes—something of the sort. Oh, to see her face pale, and her big serious eyes dilate! . . . I wish I could read that girl's future. She is in wrong hands altogether. She wants different training."

"*Natürlich*," said Paul with a faint smile. "They all do . . . Yours, for instance. I often wonder you have never established a school of female philosophers; what a revolution it would make."

"I would do it if I knew many girls like Sheba Ormatroyd," said the old man puffing huge volumes of smoke out of the big pipe. "She has thought much. She went straight to the root of the matter—the duality of good and evil . . . She thinks man was created as an experiment—but of course she holds the usual ideas imbibed at our mother's knees in infancy—one life, right or wrong—happy or wretched—and then a long night of waiting and a day of judgment; the fact of being Christian by virtue of baptism, no matter what the after life may be—the trusting to priestly explanation of Scripture and abiding by the strict letter of a text."

He pushed his papers aside and came over to the fireplace.

"I verily believe," he said, "that your vainglorious English fancy *your* Bible, as you call it, was inspired direct of Heaven in your own polyglot language, and dropped from thence ready

bound into your pulpits, and churches. You talk as if such were the case . . . . Oh! for the day that I see coming—the day when truth shall be heard through the length and breadth of the earth, and that foolish dead-letter *idolatry* abolished; when man shall see for himself that he holds the Divine Immortal Spirit in his own soul, and shall live by that light, and work for its purposes instead of throwing the whole onus of his future on the shoulders of his fellow-man and the traditions of a bigoted faith!"

"That day is very far off, I should think," remarked Paul. "It won't be in our time, my good friend, or our children's either for that matter. You can't root up some hundreds of different sects and set them all to accept one law and one faith, and you will never get any member of the English Church to acknowledge that a *gnostic* and an *agnostic* are not one and the same thing, or that both are not—atheists. The idea of any one calling that 'Unknownable,' of whose Person and Nature they are quite confident, and on whose imaginary benevolence they firmly rest all their hopes of the future! It seems to them preposterous. It is a curious fact that the aggregate portion of humanity prefers to have its religion done for it."

"It is no more curious," said Müller, "than to note the number of reasonable beings who never give themselves the trouble to think of any religion at all—anything beyond frivolity and pleasure-seeking and merry-making! Living their earth life with no higher desires and ambitions than these, they yet expect to go straight into some glorified state of being they call 'Heaven,' when that earth life is over. Poor fools—for them the hour of death will be indeed the hour of revelation! Think of sectarian prejudices—of narrow beliefs—of fragments of splintered truth grasped in trembling hands and held out as a passport; of all the useless lip-service—all the empty forms—all that the outward life has practised and to which the soul gives the lie! Picture to yourself this crowd of shivering spirits standing at the portals of the vast Beyond—the picture is appalling . . . . Here stands one clamouring, 'I was baptized into Thy Church, oh Lord; therefore am I saved.'—Here another, 'I have never missed early celebration—I have partaken of Thy own Flesh and Blood, and believed in the real presence—surely I am saved.' Here yet another, 'My righteousness is as filthy rags; still I have built a church and sent out missionaries to the heathen, and given to all charities and godly institutes of my own sect—surely I am saved.'" Then he laughed grimly, "And you and I, Paul—who have gone deeper into the matter and see the errors of others so plainly, what shall we say for ourselves that is wiser or better than this—eh?"

"God knows," said the young man drearily. "It is the old cry, you know, Müller. 'Ye remove our landmarks, give us others

11 that are better . . . . ye take away our foothold—what have ye surer or safer in its place?"

"There is nothing *sure* or *safe* to be learnt or to be found," said Müller more seriously than he had yet spoken; "not in this world—for this world is only a novitiate, a preparation—the human mind is not capable of comprehending the Infinite, or bringing the Person or Essence of a Being such as the Creator of the Universe, into the narrow scope of human words as explanation. Language cannot convey to us the real nature of God—and man, since the infancy of thought, has, therefore, committed the folly of bringing Him into human conception by dowering Him with human attributes on a somewhat larger scale. The machine made by a human brain and evolved from human consciousness may be absolutely perfect as far as its power, its use, and its mechanism, yet that machine cannot comprehend *its own use*, or the nature of its maker. Why not so with man and his Creator? He knows he *is*, and that he has a life to live and duties to perform while that life is conscious, but he is not intended to know more here—in the earth life. He is not *capable* of knowing more, though his vanity will not allow him to believe so. Ah! if the arrogant divines who fill Christian pulpits and have done so much to bind the eyes and destroy the judgment of men, would only preach of their own ignorance and limited powers of research, they could at least help instead of hinder those who seek the great truths of the Hereafter."

"Always a slap at the pulpit, Müller," said the young man smiling. "Even philosophy has not taught you to regard that institution calmly and forbearingly."

"No!" said the old German roughly, "it has not—because it is my natural enemy, because it substitutes bombast, abstractions, and fanciful imagery for the truth; because it upholds the littleness of man to be all-important, because it is arrogant and vain-glorious and would only allow man to know God through itself if it could; thank science and human reason that it can't do so any longer. Most priests speak of man as if the whole universe had been created for him instead of his being only a small fragment of its vast plan—the last work of the Creator, not the first, and the most refractory and troublesome of all!"

"All animal life is selfish and egotistic," said Paul musingly. "Each of us wants his own desires gratified, his own comforts supplied; indeed for what else are we in a material world at all?"

"For its use and purpose, perhaps, not for our own," said Müller. "Certainly the material world gets the best of it—it has all man's skill, power and invention spent endlessly on itself, and gives him nothing for which he does not labour. Yes, it gives him death . . . death in a hundred shapes and forms which he must combat as best he may. There is a popular cant which



calls Nature 'our kind mother.' Now that is just one of those things men say and repeat to each other without thinking of the real meaning."

"What is Nature, then?" asked Paul. "You generally take the opposite side of an established belief."

"The kindness of Nature should *not* be an established belief," cried the old man wrathfully. "Think it out for a moment—she yields beauty to the earth and scatters plagues and pestilence in the same spot; she gives abominable climates to the countries where the largest amount of human life is propagated; or if temperature and climate are genial and beneficial they are counterbalanced by tortures of insects and reptiles, and perils of savage foes and furious animals. Disorder, destruction, sickness and danger are all her children, her favourite children, one would say, seeing that each and all of these are foes to the human race. Man is brought into the world, not to find her forces at his service, but that he may wage perpetual warfare against them. Hurricanes and earthquakes destroy his handiwork with absolutely brutal disregard to the skill and toil spent in that labour. The sea is a deadly foe, the sky scatters hail and rain, the air whirlwinds and tempests. The apparent insignificance of insect life can be turned into a devastating army; at every turn and from every sentient thing we meet with danger or opposition. And this is your kind Nature, your beneficent mother! *Ach, lieber Himmel*, the senselessness and idiocy of it all!"

"Oh, Müller, Müller," laughed the young singer in mock despair, "have you a good word for nothing? Do you condemn earth and Heaven, God and man, faith and unfaith, good and evil alike with scathing philosophy?"

"I come of a race that thinks," answered the old man quietly, "and accept not hearsay and tradition to save a little trouble to their own brains. Now *your* countrymen like their thinking done for them, while they grub for gold, or smoke in their offices, or read their newspapers, or nurse their babies; their only virtues are *domestic*—*ja!* a land of wife-beaters, of drunkards, of mammon-worshippers—and—yes, all that is to their credit—of church builders! A land of magnificent hypocrites and incredible dullards! Sum up all their virtues in that one word, *domestic*. They are 'stay-at-home,' they pay their taxes, they reverence rank and royalty, they worship wealth, they support their families, and they go regularly to their parish church. Ah, my Paul, and they expect all the world to look on and say with admiring breath, 'Surely of such is the kingdom of Heaven!' When I write a History of Nations——"

But Paul laughed outright. "Another history," he said; "how many does that make, *lieber Freund?*"

He rose from his seat and went over to the old German and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"To hear you talk," he said, "one would imagine you had not a kind feeling for any of your race. Fortunately I know better. Your heart is as sympathetic as it is big and generous—it is only your brain that is cynical and pessimistic. And now I'm not going to listen to you any more to-night. You had better sit up and try your hand at one of those wonderful histories that, like the blessings of man, never *are*, but always are 'to be.' Seriously, Müller, if you don't make haste and write *one*, at least, you will find that the time allotted for your natural existence has gone by, unless, of course, you mean to return again to the earth plane; but as you cannot choose your personality, you may find your soul in the body of one of your enemies the priests at your next incarnation."

Müller laughed too as he rose and laid aside his pipe and shook himself like a great rough bear.

"Maybe," he said, "but he would be a priest of a new order and persuasion if he had my soul within him. As for the histories—perhaps I am only waiting to know if it will be a waste or a gain of time and thought to write them, before I commence to do so. And now good-night, you need some sleep, or you will be fit for nothing to-morrow."

"Good-night," said Paul; "if you have succeeded in making Sheba Ormatroyd only half as uncomfortable as you have made me, you may go to sleep with a quiet conscience. Rest assured neither of us can ever again be satisfied with *living* life, and not thinking of its real purport."

"Better pain than sloth," said Müller fiercely; "better doubt than blindness; better shame than self-satisfaction! The torpor of even the thinking portion of the civilized world is appalling with regard to intellectual culture and spiritual advance. What can one say of the *non-thinking*? As beasts ye live, and eat, and sleep, and devour one another. . . . As beasts ye deserve to die!"

## CHAPTER XXX.

### SHEBA RECEIVES A GIFT.

SINCE Sheba had entered on her career of independence she had been completely ostracized from her home circle. She never dined with them now, taking her own simple meal at mid-day at a confectioner's shop in George Street, and having merely some tea in the library or her own room when she returned home. This special evening, however, as she entered her room, she found a note pinned to a large parcel that was lying on her bed. She saw it was in her mother's handwriting, and somewhat surprised, she opened it.

It began almost affectionately: "Dear Child,—Let us bury these unhappy differences. We will say no more about your foolish whim. Put on this pretty frock, and come down to dinner at seven as usual, if only to please your poor unhappy mother. You will find two old friends here."

The blood flushed to the girl's face; her heart swelled and softened. Had she misjudged her mother after all? Was she unhappy despite her luxurious life, and did she love her a little, despite their many differences of opinion? The quick tears dropped on those pencilled lines; she felt how lonely her life had been of late, and that it was a welcome relief to hear the unhappy quarrels were to be buried. It was characteristic of her to think far more of the note and its kind words, than of the accompanying present; characteristic, too, that instead of looking at it, she should seat herself by the bed and allow her thoughts to wander off into all sorts of extraordinary channels, all of them flowing to or from the fount of that curious intellect which had to-day been unsealed for her edification.

The old German had aptly described himself as a "broom," a great rough broom, but Sheba's mind had not been such a simple ungarnished chamber as he supposed. On the contrary, ever since she could think or reason at all, religious speculations had dominated every other. The world beyond was far oftener in her thoughts than the world of the present, though it was not the sort of world presented by ordinary creeds and doctrines—a vague, mysterious, unaccountable place, where winged beings floated to and fro on mystic errands of doubtful utility, and whose leisure time was spent in harping hymns and, to quote Franz Müller again, "in eternal adoration of some vaguely defined glory."

As a child she had wondered what pleasure such an existence would have for unmusical people, or specially active minds to whom quiescence meant only stagnation. She had been told it was impious and sinful to question such matters, and referred to the Book of Revelation, which, after reading, she had likened to an impossible fairy tale.

Now, however, all these speculations, all these inexplicable mysteries seemed to crowd back, and weigh on her brain even more heavily than of yore.

She had been prepared to hear of faulty teaching, of errors mixed with truth, as chaff with grain; of the inutility of creeds, and forms, and doctrines, on which the ordinary disciples of Christianity laid such stress; but she had not been prepared to hear that the idea of one Heaven and one earth for man might be altogether erroneous; that hell, as a *place*, had no existence; that there was a conception of Nature, and of the origin and destiny of human life, differing entirely from any preconceived or theological idea which had ever been presented to her.

To trace the beginning of all things back, infinitely further

than that unsatisfactory phrase of the First Chapter of Genesis, was in itself astounding; but to hear that a race was in existence who knew infinitely more about the *science* of spiritual things than any books recorded, and to be suddenly presented with a view of Nature and man, such as her wildest dreams had never approached, this was what had so overpowered her mind and paralyzed its usual activity.

She sat there on a low chair by the bed with that little note utterly forgotten, and the parcel to which it attracted her notice still unopened. She thought of Noel Hill. How good he was, how simple, how earnest; but was he blinded by that array of long-received and accepted doctrines, with which the Church bandages the eyes of its servants, and bars the way to its own more rational enlightenment?

She had read over every portion of the orthodox Church-service, from the Preface to the Thirty-nine Articles, and arriving at the last-named portion, had marvelled how any man could conscientiously vow to accept, maintain and believe them. As for the Athanasian Creed, even Noel Hill had declined to discuss *that*. Not many weeks back it had been read out in church, and she had shocked her mother afterwards by saying that if the so-called saint had intended it as an explanation, his intellect had proved itself signally incapable of the task he had undertaken.

Mrs. Levison had never even attempted to understand it; she did not think it necessary, being one of that contented class of persons who are satisfied that wiser minds have arranged these matters for them, and that their part of Christian duty is simply to say "Amen" to the statements they hear from altar, or pulpit.

Poor Sheba. Her brain ached; her heart was heavy. The old footholds seemed slipping further and further away. She felt as one who wades through deep waters, and finds that at every step the dark swift current sweeps higher and higher, till breath is suspended, and every advance threatens destruction.

Half unconsciously she sank on her knees in the gathering darkness, and her heart cried out faintly and feebly for an aid that she told herself was fast becoming problematical.

"Oh, God! if indeed there be a God whom the prayers of mortals can reach, help me now. Show me Thyself . . . ere it is too late."

Those last words fell like a whisper through the falling dusk, and she shuddered at her own temerity even as they left her lips.

For an instant she raised her head; her eyes strained upwards. All was silence. Night fell like a veil over the external world, and, alas! alas! a darker and more terrible veil seemed to descend and enfold that kneeling figure, for whom, as for thousands and thousands of others, the first touch of doubt seemed as an earth-

quake's shock, shivering every pre-conceived faith into a myriad fragments, opening wide an insatiable abyss, into which fell all that had hitherto meant safety, and shelter, and life!

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The door opened suddenly. A little figure gorgeous as a butterfly stood there, and tried to pierce the gloom by the aid of the lights in the passage.

A little shrill voice echoed wonderingly through the room:

"Sheba, Sheba! Good gracious; what are you saying your prayers for at this time? Surely you're not going to bed! And your dress—why, you haven't even looked at it. Aren't you going to put it on?"

Sheba rose from her knees, dazed and bewildered.

The child flitted about, lighting the candles, tugging at the string of the parcel, chattering all the time as incessantly as a little brook flowing over its stony pebbles.

"Mamma is so anxious you should look nice, and this gown is lovely. I went with her to buy it, and she had it made by your own old Toinette. I should have been jealous only I had a new one too, and you are to wear crimson roses with it. Oh, Sheba; why don't you wake up? Why, in a quarter-of-an-hour they will be all here—your great friend Bessie Saxton, and the young clergyman, and a strange foreign gentleman just come over from England—such a swell; mamma is quite excited about him. He has a title; the Count de Phalamong, I think that's his name. Oh, dear; if I were only as old as you, and could go down to dinner!"

Sheba roused herself with an effort. "Did you say Bessie Saxton was coming?" she asked, rapidly unfastening her dress and walking over to the toilet-table.

"Yes," cried Dolly, who had by this time cut the string, and now was flinging aside folds of paper until at last the new gown itself was revealed, and laid down on the bed with almost reverential touch. "You had better make haste," she went on. "Shall I ask Martha to come and help you? She dressed me in half-an-hour."

"No," said Sheba shortly. "I never want help, as you know. I was not brought up to be useless. Fifteen minutes is plenty of time even to get into a new gown."

"You are funny," said Dolly, surveying her, as she dashed cold water over her face and shoulders. "Fancy not caring how you look, or what you put on! What a splendid colour that cold water gives you. I never dare wash in cold water. I have such a delicate skin, and I want to take care of my complexion, for when I grow up—Oh! why don't you leave your hair like that? it suits you rough and loose. There now; you've spoilt it. Give your head a shake—so. Don't you see the difference that loose

wave makes dropping forward? If I had hair like yours I should spend hours trying to find what style suited me best. What, changed your petticoats—and ready for your dress! Gracious! how quick you are."

Sheba had paid very little attention to this string of remarks; now she walked over to the bed for her dress, and for a moment stood looking at it in astonishment.

"Isn't it lovely? I said so," chirruped Dolly at her ear. "Such soft, rich silk, and no fear of creasing it, and such a lovely colour, and hasn't Toinette made it your way—just as if you had told her, and only two days to do it in!"

Sheba took up the gown, almost fearful of its delicate beauty. It was of a thick, very soft silk, of a lovely pale shade of yellow—the very shade for her brunette colouring; and it was made somewhat in the fashion of her usual gowns, draped from the shoulders to the hem, and confined merely by a broad silver girdle at the waist.

With her magnificent hair coiled high on the small shapely head, and that lovely flush of feverish excitement still burning on either cheek and lighting the great sombre eyes, Sheba looked like a picture of some Eastern queen, and as Dolly watched that slender figure with its free, graceful movements, she felt almost inclined to forswear crinoline and flounces herself.

Just as Sheba was fastening the rich soft folds, the door again opened, and her mother entered. In her hand she held a bunch of crimson roses just gathered from the conservatory. She almost started when she saw the transformation in her daughter, and the simple elegance of the young slight figure, that put her own gorgeous *toilette* completely in the shade.

"Why, Sheba!" she exclaimed in surprise; "I shouldn't have known you. What wonders dress can work!"

"Thank you so much for it, dear mother," said the girl timidly, coming near the violet silk and yellow roses, and bending to touch her mother's cheek.

Mrs. Levison drew hastily back, with a vivid remembrance of pistachio-nut powder lavishly and recently employed.

"Yes, yes, my dear; I quite understand," she said hurriedly. "And I am very glad you are going to be sensible again. Family quarrels are hateful, and what would the Saxtons think not to see you at dinner? By-the-by, it is just upon seven. Here, take your roses; I must be off to the drawing-room, and don't be long coming down. I thought you would have been dressed by this time."

"I think," said Miss Dolly pertly, "she was asking a blessing on her new frock. I found her praying beside it. Fancy saying prayers except at bed-time. I wouldn't: it's bother enough then. But Sheba is so funny!"

Mrs. Levison left the room hurriedly without further observa-

tion. It didn't matter to her if Sheba prayed a dozen times a day as long as she had for once dressed herself decently, and seemed prepared to be amiable.

"She looks positively pretty," she said to herself with more of surprise than pleasure. "I couldn't have believed it. Will she make an impression, I wonder?"

Just as she reached the drawing-room, Bessie and Mr. Saxton arrived, and Noel Hill followed almost directly. Mrs. Levison noticed his glance wander round the room.

"My daughter will be here presently," she said, as she eagerly took in every detail of Bessie's *toilette*, and wondered whether, after all, she had done well in keeping Sheba's costume to her own peculiar style, instead of modernizing it. For Miss Saxton was as complete an epitome of a fashion plate as woman's heart could desire. Her fair hair was *crépé* and turned into a pyramid; her gown was a miracle of flounces and lace, with little knots of flowers dropped cunningly amongst its many folds. It was also cut low in the neck, displaying a well-shaped bust and throat, and full white arms, and altogether producing a result that must have been satisfactory to any woman's mind who studied fashion more than ease, or grace, or originality.

In a few moments more the host bustled in, fussy and important, and vulgar as ever. Then came a loud peal at the bell, a nervous convulsion on the part of Mrs. Levison, and almost immediately the door opened, and the servant announced somewhat huskily, as became one unused to the enunciation of titles, and especially of foreign titles:

"The Count de Pharamong!"

Mrs. Levison was gracious—and she flattered herself stately—in her welcome. Her husband was, however, too sensible of the honour of entertaining a title at his own "mahogany," as he delicately put it, to be altogether at his ease. He used "Mossoo le Count" at every possible opportunity, and never left the unfortunate guest a moment's repose—talking to him, or at him, in a breathless, incessant fashion that irritated even his well-bred composure.

It nearly drove Bessie Saxton wild, she having decreed that the illustrious foreigner was to fall captive to her bow and spear, and not relishing Mr. Levison's interference with her "soft eyes and low replies."

As for Count Pharamond himself, he was inwardly summing up host and hostess and guests with an accuracy that did him infinite credit, when the door was quietly opened and he saw standing there a vision that fairly astounded even his beauty-sated eyes. Eagerly he watched the stately young form coming forward with so serene a grace, and muttered below his breath:

"*Dieu!* She is worthy of Paris!"

To associate her with his host or hostess seemed such an incon-



gruity that he was conscious of a feeling nearly approaching disgust, when Mr. Levison said loudly and brusquely :

"Here, Sheba, I want to introduce you. My friend, Monsieur le Count de Pharamond—my daughter, or should I say, my step-daughter—Miss Ormatroyd."

Sheba bowed. Her eyes, grave and questioning as a child's newly roused from sleep, gazed quietly up at the strange and singularly handsome face bent almost reverentially before her. Then she passed on, and greeted Bessie and Noel Hill, both of whom were equally amazed at her changed appearance.

She had only time to say a few words—no time at all to notice Bessie's curious look and somewhat acrimonious greeting : "Well, Sheba! you *are* transformed"—when dinner was announced, and she found herself following her mother and the illustrious guest, on the arm of Noel Hill.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### EXCHANGED CONFIDENCES.

"I BEGAN to despair of ever seeing you again," began Noel Hill to his companion as they seated themselves at the flower-decked table. "I have called several times ; you were always out."

"I am out every day till five o'clock," said Sheba. "You know I have a teaching engagement?"

"Yes," he said, "I know;" thinking how incongruous seemed the association of a daily governess' life, with this stately young goddess.

"Do you like your new duties?" he asked presently.

"Very much," said Sheba, while a quick, bright blush rose to her cheek, and for a moment her whole face grew sweet and soft and tender, as a face grows at some pleasant memory.

Noel Hill noticed the change and wondered as to its cause. He had heard also of the queer old man, the Wandering Jew, who was Sheba's employer—surely there could be no great charm about him to raise that flush and glow of feeling. The count, watching her also from his side of the table, felt an odd, jealous pang at sight of that lovely blush. He attributed it to something her companion had said, and wondered what it could have been.

Bessie noticed it too, and whispered audibly to her host, by whose side she was seated : "How Sheba does flirt, to be sure!" and all the time Sheba was unconscious of notice or remark, and only saw before her that face of her "Prophet," and seemed to hear again his matchless melody of voice.

The dinner went on with its wearisome round of courses and sparkling wines, about each of which Mr. Levison had something to say and boast.

"You see, Monsieur le Count, the colonies aren't so bad, after all, eh?" And the polite Frenchman, who spoke English beautifully, would bow and smile, and say he was indeed too enchanted with such magnificent hospitality.

Sheba's head ached with the lights, and clatter of tongues, and she leant back in her chair and wondered whenever her mother intended to give the signal to leave the room.

At last Mrs. Levison rose—Count Pharamond, being nearest the door, held it open as the ladies passed through. Sheba was last, and as she moved along one of the crimson roses at her waist fell to the ground. The count stooped hurriedly and picked it up, at the same time he gave one long eager look into the beautiful grave eyes that met his own. Sheba had never met such a look, and the quick blood rushed to her brow as she held out her hand for the flower.

"Nay, mademoiselle," he said in a low voice. "Let me keep it, I pray," and he placed it in his coat without waiting for a reply. Sheba felt terribly embarrassed. She was totally unused to language of compliment, or acts of gallantry. Would it be rude to refuse, she wondered; then seeing that the rose had been taken possession of she deemed it best to say nothing, so she only gave the Frenchman a little cold bow, and hurried on to join her mother and Bessie Saxton.

It happened that that astute young lady had just glanced back to see what was detaining her friend, and the little episode of the dropped rose had not escaped her.

"Well," she said, as they entered the brilliantly-lighted drawing-room, "you *are* getting on I must say. I should keep to one at a time if I were you. Don't you know the proverb about two stools?"

"I don't know what you mean," said Sheba quietly.

Bessie Saxton laughed—it was not a pleasant laugh. "Don't you," she said. "How very innocent you have become. However, don't let us quarrel; I want to have a long chat with you. Sit down here," and she drew a low-cushioned chair beside her own. "Now tell me all you have been doing since you came to Sydney. But first, how do you like my dress?"

Sheba looked at it, or rather at where it ought to have been, and coloured warmly. "Doesn't it show too much—anatomy?" she said at last.

Bessie's cold blue eyes flashed angrily. "What a little idiot you are! What's the use of having a good neck and arms if one muffles them up as you do? But then of course you're thin!"

"I think," said Sheba in her old direct fashion, "that if I were fat, I should cover myself more."

"Why don't you say at once I look indecent?" snapped Bessie. "I hate hints."

"You asked me what I thought of you——"

"No, what you thought of my dress?"

"Oh, that's very pretty," said Sheba, "for the style of dress. But you know I have a horror of flounces and bustles. If you had ever studied the art drawings——"

"Oh! you little Puritan, do shut up!" snapped Miss Saxton with the pardonable vulgarity of friendship. "Why don't you make your mother wear high dresses? I'm sure she's old enough."

"She has her husband to advise her," said Sheba gravely. "Of course if he doesn't object, it is no business of mine."

"You don't seem to have altered much in mind or disposition," said Bessie, regarding her curiously, "though you're certainly grown out of all knowledge. But now tell me, who is this Count Pharamond?"

"I don't know," said Sheba; "I never heard of his existence till I came into the drawing-room."

"That wasn't a bad *coup* of yours," sneered her friend—"coming in just when we were all assembled. I suppose you thought you'd make a sensation?"

"I am sorry I was late," Sheba answered, with serene unconsciousness of a hidden meaning. "I had only a quarter of an hour to dress in."

"You managed to do it very successfully," said Bessie, regarding her almost enviously. "Whose idea was it to have your gown made like that?"

"My own," said Sheba. "All my dresses are made so. But mother ordered this as a surprise; I never saw it till I put it on."

"It's effective," allowed Miss Saxton reluctantly. "But it would not suit everybody. You're such an odd-looking girl; perhaps you are sensible to adopt a style of your own, though it's rather—rather a strong-minded thing to do."

"Is it?" questioned Sheba. "I never thought about it in that way; I was looking over some volumes of art prints in the library and I saw this style, and having found a little French dressmaker in the town who was very poor and very clever, I got her to modernize the idea, and if you only felt the comfort——"

"Oh, fancy thinking of comfort before fashion!" exclaimed Bessie. "Besides it would never suit me. You don't wear corsets, do you?"

"Oh yes," said Sheba. "But not those stiff hard steel and whalebone things you see in the shops. Toinette—that is the little Frenchwoman—makes them for me. They are quite soft and pliable, and you can move any way with them; as for waist, you know I never did care about that."

"Mine," said Miss Saxton with pardonable pride, "is only nineteen inches; yours looks about twenty-five."

"Probably," said Sheba, "it is. I never measured it. Yours is all wrong, though—quite out of proportion to the width of your shoulders. You will suffer for it some day."

"Really," said Miss Saxton, "I must say you talk the most insufferable nonsense! One would think you were studying for a doctor. I wish the men would come in. Now, when they do, pray content yourself with Noel Hill, and leave the Frenchman to me."

"Certainly," said Sheba laughing. "I haven't the slightest wish to monopolize him. I don't like him. I don't like the way he looks into one's eyes; it is so bold, so rude."

"Phooh! it is only a way all Frenchmen have," interrupted Bessie. "There comes in your prudery again. You'll never get married with such ideas as those."

"I don't wish to get married," said Sheba reddening.

"My dear, that is nonsense," laughed her friend. "It sounds as if—well, as if the grapes were sour. There's nothing more hateful in life than an old maid."

"Why should they be hateful?" asked Sheba, looking with her large serious eyes straight into her friend's face.

That look somewhat dismayed Bessie. "Really," she thought, "she *is* getting handsome—in a peculiar style; I don't think it is a style that *takes*. Still one never knows."

Aloud she said, "You are just as bad as ever, wanting to know the reason of everything. It bores people to have to explain. If you carry that habit with you into society, you will make more enemies than friends."

"I'm sure I do not care," said Sheba quietly. "I shall never live or act by rules laid down for me. Every one ought to think for themselves, and not accept everything the world teaches, merely because it *is* the world's teaching."

"Gracious!" exclaimed Bessie in wonderment, "who's teaching you philosophy? That old Wandering Jew, as your mother calls him, whose child you educate?"

"Old—Wandering—Jew!" echoed Sheba in amazement. "The father of my little pupil is not old; he is quite young, in fact. He is the singer at the Opera who has taken Rialo's part. You know Rialo, the great tenor, who is not expected to live."

"What!" almost shouted Bessie. "That splendid-looking man who did the 'Prophet' last night? Paoletti, I think, was his name. Well, you *have* kept it dark. Your mother doesn't know a word about it; she thinks it is that old German curiosity whose child you teach. Heavens! what a piece of luck. I'm dying to know him. You must introduce me. What's his real name?"

"Meredith," said Sheba, "Paul Meredith. The old German is a friend who lives with him." She spoke coldly and constrainedly. Bessie's tone and words jarred on her ear, and on that sensitive reverence she had for the wonderful singer, whose advent had been the great event of her life.

"Paul Meredith," echoed Bessie. "Well, only to think of your knowing him, and I've been crazy about the man ever since I

heard him at the Opera. You must get your mother to ask him here, and I'll come. I'd like to know what he is in private life. These public characters are sometimes awfully disappointing."

Sheba rose from her chair. Her face looked cold and disturbed. "I don't think he would come here," she said.

"Not come?" echoed Miss Saxton contemptuously. "You give him the chance, and see. If he refuses, ask your step-father to engage him to sing one evening. He's rich enough."

"What's that about papa being rich enough?" said a sharp little voice at her elbow. "I know he's rich—almost the richest man in all Sydney. He's going into Parliament soon." It was Miss Dolly, who had entered hanging on to Mrs. Levison, who had vainly endeavoured to keep her out of the drawing-room.

Bessie looked at the little flounced, dressed-up figure. "Oh, it's you, is it?" she said. ("Little horror!" she added, below her breath. "There'll be no peace now.")

"You've got a new dress on," began the little tormentor. "I don't think it's pretty, and it's cut awfully low; it's worse than mamma's, and hers is bad enough. I am sure if you asked the gentlemen they'd say you were both very rude."

"Dolly," interposed Mrs. Levison sharply, "be quiet. How dare you say such things."

"Sheba told me always to speak the truth," said the little incorrigible, "and so I am speaking it. Your dresses——"

"I will send you out of the room if you don't hold your tongue," said her step-mother.

"I'll ask papa if I may come back," said Miss Dolly coolly, "and he's sure to let me. He's always good-tempered after a lot of wine."

Bessie Saxon laughed outright, despite her vexation.

Dolly was a little horror when her remarks became personal, but she really was awfully amusing.

"If our dresses don't please you," she said, "what do you think of Sheba's?"

"Oh! Sheba will never look like any one else," said the child. "She is like one of those pictures in the church windows—Vashti, isn't it, or Esther—one of them, I know. Papa says she is a great deal more Jewish-looking than I am, and she won't wear so well; she is too dark. Why don't the gentlemen come in? What a time they are. I want to see the foreign count. What is he like? He is rich; oh! so rich. Mamma said what an admirable thing it would be for Sheba, if only he would take a fancy to her."

"Dolly!" almost screamed Mrs. Levison. "Will you be quiet!"

Sheba turned her face, pale and proud enough now, to her mother. She did not say anything, but a sharp pang of humiliation rent her heart.

So it was for this the feud had been patched up, the sceptre of peace extended. For *this* the affectionate note, the costly dress, had been sent to her. That she might find favour in the eyes of this rich stranger with the bold, watchful eyes; might make a good impression on him, so far as appearances went; be used as a bait to lure him to the house! A sense of shame and disgust came over her. She had thought her mother had been unhappy because of the differences between them; she had felt such a thrill of tenderness and remorse as she had read her note, and all the time that mother had been speculating as to how this stranger would regard her, and looking upon him as a possible means for ridding herself of an encumbrance.

Perhaps she judged her mother too harshly; but in any case the revulsion of feeling was for the time intense, and overpowered every other consideration. She felt like a trapped bird, and all the old wild rebellious thoughts surged back in a dark, continuous stream, and her brow grew dark and her eyes wrathful as the opening door revealed the figure of the new guest.

"She—make an impression—no fear of that," muttered Bessie Saxton as she watched that dark, gloomy face. "I know what Frenchmen are; they like wit, *verve*, brightness, *chic*. Upon my word I think I'll go in for him myself, as he's so rich."

She drew the lace tucker a little higher about her shapely shoulders, and fired a Parthian glance in the direction of Count Pharamond, who was standing some little distance off. Noel Hill had at once usurped Sheba, and she, nothing loth, had retreated with him to the farthest corner of the large room—effectually playing into her friend's hand, and vexing her mother excessively.

The count, apparently disregarding Miss Saxton's overtures, dropped into a seat beside his hostess.

"You will pardon me, madame," he said, "if I express my admiration for everything Australian, as displayed in your charming *ménage*; most of all, for your exquisite young daughter. I have never seen anything like her—never."

Mrs. Levison coloured with gratified pride, under the thick coating of powder.

Did he really mean it? Was it possible that her plan was going to succeed? She glanced across at Sheba—what a fool the girl was to occupy herself with a penniless curate, when here were fortune and rank honouring her by admiration.

"You flatter her, count," she said in a fluttered voice. "She is, I suppose, different to your Parisian young ladies."

"Different!" The count raised his eyebrows. "Ah! that it was possible to express *how* different. Those divine features, that exquisite mouth, that serene, unconscious grace—*Ciel!* and what a sensation she would make in a Parisian *salon*. Might one be pardoned for asking who is the gentleman by her side who seemed so friendly, if one might say as much without offence?"

"Oh," said Mrs. Levison, "that is only her old teacher—tutor, I may say. He has known her since she was a child."

"A clergyman?" the count insinuated gravely.

"Yes, a clergyman," assented Mrs. Levison, gratified, if anything, that the count should seem a little uneasy. In the early stages of a love affair, jealousy is a great help, in the latter as great a hindrance.

"Then," the count resumed, "might he consider he had madame's gracious permission to call and still further pursue the too charming acquaintance of herself, and of her lovely daughter?"

Mrs. Levison's reply can be easily guessed. Having received it, Pharamond took himself off to Bessie Saxton's side, and rendered audacious by her ready encouragement, which she flattered herself was so *chic*, whispered flatteries, compliments and insinuations that brought the blood to her cheek, and for which her father would have kicked him out of the house had he heard them, or understood the veiled significance of French phrases.

Mrs. Levison laid her head on her pillow that night with a sigh of content and relief. Providence had indeed been kind to her. Her scheme seemed almost ridiculously easy of fulfilment. Oh! what a triumph to marry Sheba to such a husband, and what an inexplicable, heavenly relief to think of her *as* married!

(To be continued.)

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## LIFE IN A CONVICT COLONY THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.

By LIEUT.-GENERAL HENRY WRAY, R.E., C.M.G.

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WESTERN AUSTRALIA was first settled in 1829, but it made such small progress that in 1849 the colonists applied to the Home Government to send out selected male convicts to start a convict establishment; their objects being, first, to get the benefit of the expenditure, which must inevitably be considerable; second, to obtain a supply of cheap labour for their farms. It suited the Colonial Office to comply with this request, and in 1850, Captain Henderson (now Sir Edmund, K.C.B.) took out the first batch of convicts. He had on his staff five corporals of the Royal Sappers and Miners, who proved themselves useful, and in consequence he applied for an officer of the Royal Engineers and twenty-five more non-commissioned officers and men. Sir John Burgoyne, at that time head of the corps, thought the opportunity a favourable one for clearing the ranks of married soldiers, and a company, in all a hundred strong, was made up, of whom seventy-five were married, the idea being that after they had done the work required of them they would settle on free grants of land. I was offered, as a lieutenant, the command of this company and jumped at the offer, for it was thought that industrial exhibitions were going to do away with war, and the work to be done was out of the ordinary course. The other officers of the company were Second Lieutenant Du Cane (now Sir Edmund, K.C.B.) and Second Lieutenant Crossman (now Sir William, K.C.M.G.).

I often smile at the row the doctors would make, if the accommodation provided and the arrangements made for the sixty-five men, fifty-five women and seventy-nine children, on board the old ship "Anna Robertson," which went to the bottom off the Cape on her way home, were offered now-a-days for troops. The people were packed close; the water, all in casks, was taken in alongside in the Thames opposite St. Katherine's Docks, and the sweetness of the tinned *bouilli* issued every second day was frequently not above suspicion. But although we touched nowhere, and were nearly a hundred days out of sight of land, we had no sickness except whooping-cough, and the only deaths were those of two young children, the births on board having been ten.

Before we left England the men were told, quite truly, that meat in the colony cost twopence a pound, bread rather less than in England, and that wild ducks and kangaroo could be had for

the trouble of shooting them ; but the first thing they learnt, when the ship came to an anchor in Gage's roads and was put in quarantine for the whooping-cough, was that gold had been discovered in Victoria, that every one who had anything to sell had sent it off to Melbourne ; that every one who could had gone off too ; that meat was a shilling and twopence a pound, and bread sixpence, butter, milk and most other things being hardly obtainable at any price. The wild duck and kangaroo part of the expectations was correct enough, only they were a little difficult to get near, and it was easier and much more certain to pay a black fellow to shoot them.

The men thought they had been deceived, and some of them were in a desperate state, but they soon calmed down when I took two of the oldest soldiers into the cuddy and convinced them that nothing could possibly have been known of the gold discoveries when we left England, and on my telling them that they might be quite sure Captain Henderson would do what was necessary to enable them to live till prices went down. And a very fortunate thing for us all this difficulty turned out to be, for the men on disembarkation were set to work at their trades on a scale of prices which enabled them to earn on the average three shillings a day working pay, instead of one shilling—at that time the highest rate of pay for soldiers employed on day work. This scale of payment continued long after the prices of the necessaries of life had fallen, not to the figures anticipated, but far lower than in England, with the result that when I left the company early in 1858, I handed over to my successor about seventy men, all married, about a hundred and fifty children and between six hundred and seven hundred pounds in the regimental savings bank. The officers in the colony also benefited, for, on account of the high prices, an allowance was made to them which was not withdrawn for a good many years.

With the exception of an outbreak of typhoid fever immediately after disembarkation, entirely due, as we learnt afterwards, to the wells and the cesspits having been sunk close together in a sandy soil, there was never any serious sickness in the company ; and I can safely say that, notwithstanding the great heat in summer, I have never been in any climate equal all round to that of Western Australia. Six years after I left Australia, I spent a year on service in Japan, the climate of which is splendid, but I never experienced there the feeling, common enough in Australia, that mere existence was a pleasure. There were days when one got on one's horse for a solitary ride of thirty miles or more, when one felt inclined to shout for joy, and not at all bored by the prospect of such a ride all alone.

Captain Henderson had lost no time in starting the convict system, and, long before the company arrived in December, 1851, had converted a number of wool sheds at Fremantle into a tem-

porary prison, where the convicts (or prisoners, for we were never so rude as to speak of them as convicts) lived in association. The warders were chiefly soldier-pensioners who had come out as guards on board the convict ships; the pensioners not employed as warders being enrolled for duty as a military guard, forming with the sappers the garrison of Fremantle. The sappers did not usually take garrison guards, their labour being too valuable in a place where mechanics earned from eight to twelve shillings a day, but they did this duty during the annual training of the pensioners, and turned out in case of an actual or threatened disturbance among the convicts, which, however, occurred only three times during my six years' stay in the colony.

The position of the sappers as mechanics was very difficult, for having convicts as their labourers, it was their interest to get as much work out of them as they could; and the consequence, not an unnatural one, was that the prison authorities always suspected them of giving the convicts tobacco, food and liquor. This led to much friction between the governor of the prison and myself; for although I was a magistrate I was bound to protect my men; and this friction was increased by his asking that the sappers should be ordered to give him the military salute, which I entirely objected to and which they would not give of their own accord. But it was a source of constant trouble, and on one occasion led to a corporal being committed for trial for stealing government property, and on another to a sapper being fined for giving a convict drink. The grand jury ignored the bill against the corporal, but the sapper had to pay his fine. Considering the temptation and the opportunities, I always thought my men got through very creditably with only one conviction.

Nearly the whole of the sappers came home a few years afterwards, the work for which they were sent out having been completed. It would not have paid them to settle in the colony. Their chance, if, as originally intended, they became settlers, lay in their working at their trades, filling up their unemployed time by cultivating their allotments; but this chance was cut from under them by the training as mechanics, in the shops and on the works, of a large number of convicts. These men, when they went on ticket-of-leave, were almost always free from any incumbrances, could move from place to place as work turned up, and were numerous enough to do all the work the settlers required. I do not know whether the pensioner settlers did better after I left the colony than they did before, but at that time their success as settlers was certainly not such as to induce the sappers to follow their example.

The convict system was what was then spoken of as the "Moral Force System," which had been first introduced by Captain Maconochie at Norfolk Island, and carried on in Ireland and in England by Sir Walter Crofton and Sir Joshua Jebb. It was

admirably adapted to give a man who had got into trouble through some strong temptation, a chance of a new start in life and of becoming a good citizen. I cannot say that I ever knew of a single case of reformation beyond this, and a number of instances came within my knowledge of men, who had behaved, whilst under control, as reformed men would be expected to behave, coming back to the prison from ticket-of-leave for having again yielded to temptation, frequently, or I may say generally, of precisely the same kind as that which led to their original offence. I was also quite convinced that many men came out of prison far worse men than they were when they went in, and it is difficult to see how any other result could have been expected, in view of the fact that the convicts lived in association for months or even years, and were sure to brag to each other about their former lives. A ticket-of-leave man, who lived with me as a servant for upwards of five years, whom I came to trust thoroughly and who showed himself completely worthy of that trust, told my wife that, during the time he was in prison, he learnt all the tricks of the trades of his comrades. This association was unavoidable, until the new prison which ultimately provided for five hundred men in separate cells was ready for occupation, when the evil was reduced to some extent, but even then the association in the working parties continued.

The system may be shortly described. The convicts were in three classes—"Prisoners," "Ticket-of-leave" men and "Conditional Pardon" men, besides which there was the "Re-convicted Gang," some of whom were in chains. The "Prisoners" were in the prison at Fremantle; the "Ticket-of-leave" men were spread about the colony, which was divided into ticket-of-leave districts, each with a resident magistrate; the "Conditional Pardon" men were absolutely free, except that they could not return home before the expiration of their original sentence.

A "prisoner" could shorten his period of imprisonment by good conduct, and when discharged to ticket-of-leave, he received some of the money which had been credited to him during his stay in prison, the amount so credited being dependent upon his conduct, as evidenced by the number of "marks" recorded against his name; he could go to any district he chose, either to an employer or to set up for himself, the only restrictions placed upon him being that he must not leave his district without a pass from the resident magistrate, or from his employer if he had one; that he must be at home every night at ten o'clock; that he must not possess firearms; that he must give an account at any time of the way in which he earned his living; that he must report himself personally to the police of his district twice a year, and that he must pay a small sum annually to cover the expense of his passage to the colony. If a ticket-of-leave man wished to go to any particular district in order to look for employment, he could be

transferred to the depôt of that district, where he was employed, at road making as a rule, and paid; he was free to spend his money as he liked, the only restriction upon him, after work, being that he must be in the depôt at eight o'clock, and that he must accept any employment which gave him twelve pounds a year with rations and lodging, being liable to be sent back to prison if he refused.

After a period of about half of his original sentence, a well-conducted ticket-of-leave man received a conditional pardon, the conditions being as already stated.

A ticket-of-leave man sent back for misconduct was sentenced for a fixed time, after which he again received a ticket-of-leave, if he earned it. The local sentence was in addition to his original one, and one-fourth of it, which could never exceed nine months, was passed in solitary confinement.

The inequality of sentences for apparently similar offences, which is so frequently commented upon in England, occurred in Western Australia, and I am afraid that it always will occur. More than twenty years ago I tried a scale of punishments with soldiers, and very soon found it to be impossible, consistently with considering each man's temperament and the possibility that a light punishment or none at all might keep him out of trouble in future, to award punishment by a scale.

The criminal law of a convict colony is necessarily more severe than that of other places, and in Western Australia "attempt to murder" and "rape" were punishable and actually punished by death. This law applied to the whole population, not to the convicts only. My recollection is that not more than eight persons were hanged for murder or attempt to murder during my stay in the colony and only one was hanged for rape.

The magistrates had the power of sentencing a ticket-of-leave man to three years' imprisonment, but they had no power to flog, corporal punishment being confined to prisoners in Fremantle prison, its infliction being ordered by the visiting magistrate of the prison, and the number of lashes limited to one hundred.

As a matter of course, alterations in the system had to be made, but they were wonderfully few, and with one exception of small importance. The exception was a great change made in the ticket-of-leave part of the system. It was very soon found that 1s. 1½d. a day with rations, lodging, easy work—for it is not possible to get convicts as a body to do even a moderately good day's work—and freedom after work till eight o'clock, offered too great inducements to many of the ticket-of-leave men to shirk going into private service, and the daily pay was reduced, first to 9½d., then to 7½d. and finally to 5½d. Even with this payment, out of which the passage money contribution was stopped, many of them preferred remaining in the depôts, and as the settlers seldom complained of refusals to take service with them, the ticket-of-leave

men remained in considerable numbers. When Captain Henderson was going on leave to England early in 1856, the governor of the colony, Captain Kennedy (afterwards Sir Arthur, G.C.M.G., C.B.), appointed me Acting Comptroller of Convicts, and Captain Henderson advised me to do away with payment to men in the depôts, to feed, clothe them in some sort of uniform and keep them in the depôts when not at work. Accordingly I issued a notice that this change would take place in two months, and the ticket-of-leave men finding that life in the depôts would not be so pleasant as it had been, went into private service in shoals. The result was to relieve the government of the cost of (I write from memory) some 250 men out of 350, those remaining being generally useless for any work at all, and not only to effect an economy of from £5,000 to £7,000 a year, but to put the settlers throughout the colony in a better position with regard to their ticket-of-leave servants. As a consequence of this measure, the passage money payment was done away with. It had always in my view been an indefensible and irritating tax, very difficult to collect, and as a rule, collected only from the better disposed men. Any ticket-of-leave man could leave the depôt at once, if he got employment, or showed that he could earn an honest living. The change was effected without trouble of any kind, and the new system worked perfectly during the rest of the time I was driving the convict coach, about eighteen months, when Captain Henderson returned from leave.

I may here say that the ticket-of-leave men were generally very well behaved, and that at no time was it necessary to carry arms, when on the road or indeed anywhere. On one occasion, when I had put my "Colt" in my wallet, hoping to get a shot at some turkey bustards which, I was told, had been seen several times close to the road I was going to travel, the stableman at the place I put up at expressed his surprise and asked if it had become necessary to carry arms.

In my opinion it was a great misfortune both for the mother country and for the colony that the other Australian colonies insisted upon transportation to Western Australia being put a stop to. I have no doubt that they were quite right, for at least nine-tenths of the conditional pardon men and expirees would have found their way there, and they would eventually have had a large ex-criminal population. I believe that the ticket-of-leave system in England works as well as it can be expected to work, but it cannot possibly afford that opportunity to criminals to begin life afresh, which the circumstances of Western Australia afforded, or which any newly settled country would afford.

I will now relate some personal experiences which may illustrate the peculiarities of life in a convict colony more than thirty years ago. Of necessity they are egotistical.

About May, 1852, a large ship, the "Eglinton," loaded with



Government stores, and having on board £15,000 in specie, ran on a reef some thirty miles north of Fremantle and became a total wreck. Captain Henderson received the first news of the wreck from his brother, afterwards Bursar of Magdalen, who was killed in 1882 in rescuing a woman from a carriage, the horses of which had run away. He had started from the wreck on the previous day with some other passengers. Captain Henderson's butler, a ticket-of-leave man, at first refused to let him in, a walk of thirty miles, with a night in the bush after a wreck, having somewhat spoiled his natural neatness. His companions had knocked up, and were somewhere between the wreck and Fremantle. Captain Henderson at once chartered a small schooner, put on board a diving apparatus, found a convict to act as diver with a ticket-of-leave man to help him, while I found a sapper, who could dive if necessary and acted in a way as a guard, and sent her up the coast. The sergeant of police at Fremantle and I then went to look for the lost passengers, whom we found, after a long beat backwards and forwards from the coast into the bush, walking along the beach in the sea, suffering much from thirst, but all right otherwise, and we then went on to the wreck. The schooner arrived in the course of the day, as well as the water police, a small fleet of whale boats looking for salvage, a commissariat officer with a military guard to take charge of the money, and a number of people of all sorts, who came out of curiosity.

There were two reefs outside of the wreck, over which she had passed, striking more or less heavily, and there were seeming breaks in these reefs, through one of which the water police whale boat tried to pass out to the schooner, which was beating about outside. The break in the reef looked smooth enough, although there were heavy breakers on each side of it, but when we were about half-way through, a great roller came in and sent the boat up like a rearing horse, happily passing under us and breaking just astern. The sea being full of sharks on that coast, we lost no time in turning round, and getting out of the break as soon as we could, and I do not think that that boat's crew ever rowed harder than they did for the next five minutes. The schooner's people soon afterwards found an opening in the reefs further to the north, and brought the diving apparatus to the wreck in their dingy. The men who had come to look for salvage, with one or two exceptions, would not help us, and the water police crew had to look after their own boat, so that about eight of us had to do the whole of the work of trying to save the money, which was on the keel of the ship close to the stern. We had to remove a large number of powder-barrels and other things from the main deck before the diver could get at the hatchway and break it open, and when we had done that we had to work the apparatus between us. The diver's part of the work was very dangerous, as the stern of the ship had opened all down the



rudder-post, and as he was washed about by the seas rolling in through the opening, his dress might have been caught by a projecting nail or by a broken timber, and he must have been drowned. As it was, he succeeded in recovering the money. For this service he received £200 and a free pardon. I never knew what reward the ticket-of-leave man received. Eventually the Treasury granted £150 to be divided amongst those who had been instrumental in saving £15,000.

I picked up a small experience on this occasion, of which I afterwards made use as an engineer. At first all the water required by the crew and passengers, who were camped on the beach, had to be brought from the wreck, but one of the settlers showed them that by sinking a flour-barrel in the sand, a few feet from high-water mark, a fair supply of fresh water could be obtained. There is hardly any rise and fall of the sea along this coast, so that the land water is kept in by the sea, and for some distance inland stands in the wells nearly at the level of the latter. I tested this afterwards by sinking a well about fifty feet from high-water mark near Fremantle, from which the whaling ships obtained a good supply. The draft on such wells must not, however, be too quick, or the sea water will find its way in.

One evening I returned home rather late, and found a convict lunatic had taken possession of the kitchen. He had escaped from the hospital, and had nothing on but a flannel shirt. The first thing he had done when he entered the kitchen, frightening the servant girls a good deal, was to appropriate all the forks and spoons on a tray which had been got ready for my supper, and it was only on his being carried through the cottage by the warders who came to fetch him, when he dropped one of the spoons, that we discovered the theft. This man was a light-weight prize-fighter, and had been transported for some offence following a long succession of convictions for petty larceny. He was generally very quiet, not speaking for months at a time, but was extremely violent at long intervals.

When I first went to the colony there was a very clever fitter in the prison who had been transported for forging a die. He could do anything, from making a false tooth to making and using a false key. He went out on ticket-of-leave more than once, but came back again. At the time I was Acting Comptroller of Convicts, this man was working, on his own account, a steam flour-mill up the country. He applied for leave to marry, asserting that his wife was dead, and was told that if he would give me the means of making inquiries in England, he should have leave as soon as I received legal proof that his wife was no more. He could not or would not do this, and leave to marry was refused.

One day he came to me in Perth and said, "Well, sir, you won't give me leave to marry?"

I replied that I should be very glad to do so, but must first have legal proof of his wife's death.

"Well, sir," he said, "you know that any man in this colony who can drive a nail straight is a clever man, and you know I can drive a nail straight."

"Yes, I know you can."

"Then I shall 'ook it."

"I would not do that if I were you, because we shall catch you, and then you will have to come back to Fremantle."

However, he persisted in threatening to "'ook" it, and I had to consider how I should prevent his doing so without injuring him. I was going to Fremantle in the steamer, and when I arrived I at once sent a mounted policeman to the magistrate of his district, and requested him to take the necessary steps to prevent my friend carrying out his threat. I am sure that his rest was disturbed a good deal for some time afterwards by the police making inquiries at all hours of the night as to whether he was at home, but he did not run away in my time at any rate.

One servant I had said he had fought a duel with a policeman, which meant that he had killed a guardian of the law in some disturbance, and been convicted of manslaughter, and he told my wife that if he had been a gentleman no notice would have been taken of it. Another had killed his man in a prize fight; and another had been convicted of trying to extort money from his master. It will naturally be asked why I took such a man as the last into my service, but I made a point of not asking what a convict had been sent out for, and only ascertained afterwards, generally from the men themselves, what crime they had committed. I do not take any credit for this, because the prison authorities were rightly shy of spoiling a man's chance in life by telling his previous history. I took this man over from Captain Henderson when he went on leave, and he was a first-rate groom, but he would persist in burning one of my horses for lampers, in spite of my orders not to do it, and I discharged him in consequence. Being at that time Acting Comptroller of Convicts, I was in a position to inquire quietly what his offence was, with the result mentioned. He got his conditional pardon about a week afterwards, and went to India with a cargo of horses.

One servant I had was a silent man, who did his work well. One day he disappeared, and after waiting for twenty-four hours I went into his room, when I found on his pillow a large placard on which was hand-printed in Roman capitals about an inch long: "Let thy servant depart in peace." I let him depart, and heard afterwards he was doing well in another district. I never knew what offence he had committed.

The servant of whom I have previously spoken was a trained gardener, but could turn his hand to most things. He was, with two other exceptions, the only convict about whose guilt I had any

doubt. He had got fifteen years for arson, and my reasons for doubting his guilt were first, that the story he told my wife—he never said a word to me about it—was in itself a probable one; second, that I received a letter from the gentleman in whose service he was at the time of the trial, giving me a similar account of the circumstances. On one occasion I had been in Fremantle till midnight, and on returning home my wife told me that the dog had been barking furiously for some time. It was a moonlight night, such as is seldom seen in England, and taking the dog, I hunted the place all over. Finding nothing, I locked the dog into the kitchen and went to bed, the dog being still quite furious. I had not been in bed five minutes when I heard my servant, who had a room at the stable, calling for help, and going out as quickly as I could, found him in his shirt only, kneeling on the chest of a man who had sneaked into his room with no good object, for he bolted as soon as my servant woke up. John, as I shall call him, went for him and knocked him over in the middle of the paddock, where I found them. We secured the fellow, who was a free man, a sailor, suspected of having committed a burglary at another house. When the police came they had almost to carry him, for he pretended to have been hurt and would not walk; but directly he got outside the paddock into the road, he slipped his handcuffs and bolted into the scrub. The night was too bright for him, and he was soon caught. Next day he got three months, but there happened to be a short-handed ship in the roads, just about to sail for Ceylon, and he was allowed to ship on board of her. The colony could well afford to get rid of a rascal it was not obliged to keep.

I found that many convicts looked on their offences in a light quite different from that in which they are regarded by other people. The men who had committed what they called the gentleman's crime, forgery, looked upon themselves as superior to the ordinary convict who had been guilty of the vulgarity of theft or burglary, and it must be said for them that the "gentlemen" as a rule took some pride in their dress in the way of cleanliness and such neatness as was possible with the convict uniform, which was not, except with the re-convicted and runaway men, so horribly ugly as it is in England. One of these forgers was employed for a year or more as a clerk in my office, and he did his work so well, that when his period of imprisonment was about six months from its termination I interceded for him, and got him his ticket-of-leave before it was due. As soon as he was told of this, he came into my room in his convict dress to thank me. I asked him if he knew of any "prisoner" who could take his place, and he named another forger, a German, and after telling me what a good clerk he was, he wound up by saying, "And I can vouch for his being a most respectable man." The German proved to be a very good clerk and was very useful to me, for I took advantage of his being in

the office to rub up my knowledge of his language. My "very respectable" clerk went into business with the contractor for timber, and was drowned in crossing a flooded river some three or four years afterwards.

The same peculiar way of looking at their offences was illustrated on another occasion by a convict whom I had known some years before on the works at Gibraltar. He was a great, powerful man, of the type one frequently sees depicted in *Punch*. One day, just after a shipload of convicts had been landed and were working, as they always did after arrival, in barrow runs for a few days to enable them to stretch their limbs after long idleness on board ship, I saw my friend again. When he thought he was far enough away from the warder in charge, he dropped his barrow, and came up to me.

"You recollect me, sir?"

"Yes, I do, perfectly. Did you come here from Gibraltar?"

"No, sir; from England."

"What for?"

"Burglary, sir."

By this time the warder thought he had talked to me long enough, and ordered him to go back to his work, which he did, saying:

"And I hope you won't forget me, sir."

A ticket-of-leave man came once to ask me a favour, and began by telling me how pleased he was to see me, because my father had married him. The poor fellow's face grew very long indeed, when he found that my father had not been a parson.

I have said that outbreaks in the prison were few, and this was due to three causes. First, the system was a humane one, humanely administered; second, the governor of the prison possessed a thorough knowledge of convicts; third, the entire absence of confidence in each other amongst the convicts themselves. Any convict could see the governor any morning, subject of course to the risk of punishment if he made frivolous complaints, or had really nothing to say; and a larger or smaller number did so daily. If anything in the way of an organized resistance to discipline were contemplated, the governor always heard of it beforehand from one or more of his morning visitors, and the convicts knowing this, and being quite unable to spot the traitor, generally gave up combination as a bad job. On one occasion, when an hour had been added to their working time in the middle of the Australian summer, they determined to strike. But the governor knew all about it, and got together all his warders, out of sight, my company under arms being also close by and out of sight. In order not to attract attention, I went in plain clothes into the yard, where the convicts, some three or four hundred in number, were formed up in close column of working parties, and stood in a casual sort of way at the door of Captain Henderson's office, close

to the head of the column, Captain Henderson looking on from his office upstairs. When the chief warder gave the word to march off, not a man moved, and on his repeating the command, again not a man moved. He then went into the governor's office, who was prepared for what had happened. The governor, a small, dapper man, who always looked as if he had just come out of a band-box, waited a minute or two, and then strolled out of his office, with a memorandum in one hand and a pencil in the other, apparently adding up some figures. When he got close to the left-hand man of the front working party, a great, powerful fellow nearly six feet high, he stopped short and turning sharp to him, pointing at him with his pencil, said quite quietly:

"Do you refuse to go to work?"

"No, sir."

"Then fall in there," pointing to his own right.

The man obeyed. The governor treated the rear rank man and two or three others in the same way, and then giving the word "right face"—we used to "face" from the halt in those days—the whole column filed off to work, and the strike was over.

Very occasionally a row occurred in the prison from unforeseen causes, but these were generally of small dimensions, and dealt with by the warders, without help. There was, however, one of this kind which promised to be serious. It arose from somewhat peculiar circumstances. The Roman Catholic chaplain had on the Sunday preached a sermon to the men of his faith, who were all lodged together, in which he had said something which the governor thought injurious to discipline, and on the Monday he suspended the chaplain from duty, the consequence being that on the Tuesday morning the Roman Catholic prisoners had no prayers. They resented this, and after dinner refused to turn out for work, and threatened violence. As matters looked serious my company was sent for, and after galloping to the sapper barracks and telling the colour-sergeant to "double" down as many men as he could get together at once, without troubling himself about their being smart, I went on to the prison. When I reached the long hut, where the mutineers were, the warders had been collected in considerable force, and were just about to attack. As I had nothing at that time to do with the discipline of the convicts, I merely looked on. The mutineers, about a hundred in number, were at a disadvantage, for the hammock frames narrowed their front to about ten feet, and protected the warders on both flanks. The arrangement for the attack was that four or five warders, covered by the rest, went for one particular convict, not minding any blows they might get from the others. When they had overpowered their man they brought him out, and went back for another. When five had been brought out, the rest gave in. The five men received at once a hundred lashes each in the presence of the whole of the convicts and a guard composed of my company and

enrolled pensioners. This, with one exception about a year before, when some one threw spirits in bladders over the wall of the prison, and some convicts got drunk and became violent, was the only occasion on which I ever saw corporal punishment inflicted, for although it was not done away with for many years after I joined the army in 1843 I never saw a soldier flogged, nor was I ever a member of a court martial which sentenced a soldier to be flogged; and although I sailed a good deal in Her Majesty's ships afterwards, no sailor was flogged on board any one of them.

I was never an advocate for flogging except for violence, and when I took over the duty of Acting Comptroller of Convicts one of the first things I did was to ask the visiting magistrate to confine flogging to acts of violence and to persistent idleness. I do not think that during the two years I was in office half-a-dozen convicts were flogged for violence; but one man, who never could be made to work by other punishments, received at my suggestion twenty-five lashes, my idea being that he was a cur, and that he would work rather than be flogged again—and he did.

I also asked the visiting magistrate to stop the flogging of convicts for running away, because first, I said that if I were a convict I should run away if I could, and second, because the men ran away in ignorance of the great difficulty of escaping from the colony, and, unless they were caught immediately afterwards, always suffered severe hardships; and underwent physical suffering enough.

No "prisoner" ever got away from the colony during the six years I was there, ticket-of-leave men doing so only very occasionally. In the summer time, when there was no rain for months, the police simply put a native policeman on the track of the runaway, and he would run him down generally in twenty-four hours. In winter, when rain fell very heavily, the tracks were soon washed out. The colony being long and narrow, with a good many rivers running down from the higher land to the coast, the police had only to watch the river crossings, and never failed to catch the men they were after in a week or so.

Bushranging, as practised in the other colonies, did not exist, for there were comparatively few farms to rob, there was no extent of country for a bushranger to hide in, and there was, and is still, no land communication with the eastern colonies.

My wife and I had three experiences of runaway convicts, one of which might have had serious consequences. I was away from home one night on some duty, and my wife was left, as she often was, in the cottage with two women servants, whom that evening she had allowed to go out. While they were away, she heard some one come in at the front gate, and, thinking it was my colour-sergeant, took no notice. Later on she heard some one at the back, but, not being a nervous woman, again took no notice. The next morning the police tracked two



re-convicted men, who had escaped from the prison, up to the cottage, which was on the border of the town, and some two hundred yards distant from the nearest house. These men told the doctor, who examined them medically before they were flogged, that they could not make out whether I was at home or not. Fortunately they came to the conclusion that I was, and went away, hiding themselves in a stack of straw close by, where the police found them.

Nearly the same thing occurred again afterwards, when I was at home; but we only knew of the visit the next morning, when the police tracked the runaways up to the window of the room where we were at breakfast.

The third experience was that of a young convict, who was supposed not to be "all there," escaping from his working party in broad daylight. He was going to pass about a hundred yards in front of my cottage, when I saw him and intercepted him, speaking to him by name. I said, "Don't you think you had better go back; you will only get yourself into trouble."

He replied, "I'd as lief knock your head off as look at you;" but he went back, and I have no doubt that I saved him a flogging.

The native police were kept solely for the purpose of tracking, which, like all the natives, they did in a marvellous way. I have seen a native track a kangaroo across dry rocky ground, where I could not see a mark at all, going at a gentle run all the time; and when I was in Ireland, in 1879-82, I suggested to one of the staff at the Castle that it would be worth while to try trackers on moonlighters. I still think that their employment, not necessarily Australians, who by this time are difficult to get, would be a good move.

The natives were generally harmless and good-natured, but my experience was that they could not be permanently civilized. When the Roman Catholic bishop returned from Europe, about 1856, he brought back a native servant, who had been with him for some two years or more. I saw this man when he landed, and was greatly struck by his appearance and manners, yet when he fell ill, shortly afterwards, he deserted the Catholic mission, and went back to his tribe to die in a native hut, with a kangaroo skin to cover him.

The natives would come into the town to earn money for tobacco by splitting firewood, or working in the stores; but they would seldom work longer than was necessary to get money for their immediate wants, and then they would loaf about, or go back into the bush again. They were, however, very obedient to the law, except when some one gave them liquor, which was forbidden, and then they took to brandishing their spears and throwing their kyries in a dangerous manner. One afternoon I was looking out of my cottage window, when I saw a drunken native



spear at one of his wives. A lot of them had come down to the coast for a gorge of whale's flesh, the bay whalers having killed and cut in a whale a day or two before. I thought it right to interfere, and walked slowly down to the man, taking with me a couple of stirrup leathers, as I could not at the moment find a piece of rope to tie him with. I found that I knew him, and speaking to him by name, ordered him to put down his spear, which he did. I then told him to hold out his hands, which he also did, and securing them in a very rough way with the stirrup leathers, I led him off towards the town. In a short time I met the police, who had got wind of the danger, and were coming to fetch him.

I once showed a native who was sitting at my back door on a hot day in summer, and whose presence was, to say the least of it, disagreeable, a bit of soap, a rag, and two sixpences, and pointing to the pump, told him I would give him the "white money" if he would use the rag and the soap. The black fellow grinned and went through the motions of using them, while I looked on, but although there was an improvement, it was only sufficient to warrant my giving him one sixpence, with the promise that he should have the other on his completing our bargain, which he never did.

Many of the horses bucked badly, and the conclusion I came to was that buckjumping was almost, if not quite, due to bad breaking. I had often heard that some stock were more likely than others to turn out buckjumpers, and with the light since thrown upon "heredity," I have no doubt this was true, but as no more trouble was taken to break this stock than was taken with other horses I did not believe it at the time. "Breaking," which might more correctly have been called "spoiling," consisted of driving a horse into a narrow stall in the corner of the stock-yard, putting a bit in his mouth, a surcingle round his body, fastening the reins to the surcingle, and turning him loose in the stock-yard, which was covered with at least a foot of straw. The first effort of the horse was to break the surcingle by blowing himself out, and the next to get rid of it by bucking. I never saw a horse succeed in doing either. Having had experience of two bad buckjumping falls, fortunately in soft places, I decided to buy unbroken horses from the herd. In all, I bought and broke three, and none of these buckjumped, though one of them was bad-tempered and had a trick of kicking high when going fast.

Many people, especially if not long from England, thought little of buckjumping, and I had an amusing experience of this. When I got my second fall from the same horse I determined to get rid of him, and tendered him to the Government for the police, of course saying why I did so. It happened that three or four days afterwards some convicts escaped, and the sergeant of police, who had been a horse artilleryman, and had only lately arrived from

England, came to my cottage with a private of police, one horse, and two saddles, &c., asking me to let him have the horse to go after the runaways. I consented, but advised him to give my horse a good burst down the sandy road with the other horse before mounting him or he would probably get a fall, which advice he was too proud to take. He mounted, never got his right stirrup, and after five or six jumps came off with a thud. The scrub was very wet, so I did not at first go to see if he was hurt, but he lay there so long that at last I went and found him just recovering his wind. He called the horse an "ungainly" brute, but mounted him again and got away all right the second time. The delight of the private at his sergeant's fall was a sight to see, for he had been anxious to try the new mount himself, and the sergeant had told him to hold his tongue. When the horse began to buck he shouted at the top of his voice, "You'll be off," and when the sergeant fell he yelled as loudly as his laughter would let him, "There; I knew you'd be off."

I never saw a Western Australian horse buck like those ridden by the cowboys at Buffalo Bill's.

The horses were wonderful stayers, and, not being coddled as horses are in England, were free from the diseases produced by hot, ill-ventilated, and badly-drained stables. A man, riding with his valise fifteen or sixteen stone, would think nothing of riding a hundred miles in two days on the same horse, resting one day, and riding back in two more.

They had a wonderful power, if they got loose, of finding their way back to the runs on which they were bred, and this gave horse owners a great chance of recovering lost horses. On two occasions horses of my own got away in the bush, and knowing where they had been bred, I recovered them without difficulty. The custom was to put a notice in the papers describing the animal, stating where he was bred, and offering the usual fee, two guineas, for his return.

My experience also led me to think that horses can find their way when it is so dark that their riders cannot see where they are going. One winter's afternoon I started rather late for a ride of over forty miles through the gum forest, on the ironstone ranges, riding a borrowed white horse and leading my own, which had got a sore back on the first part of the journey. About an hour after sunset it became so dark that I could only see that I was on a white horse. Suddenly, I was nearly pulled out of the saddle by the led horse, and on dismounting found him amongst the branches of a fallen tree. I had got off the track, and after freeing him with much trouble, mounted again, this time letting the white horse take his own line. After one or two stoppages, caused by the led horse getting into difficulties, the white horse took me back to the track and to the bush inn I was bound for.

Early in the year 1857, the Home Government presented the

colony with two lighthouses, one of which was to be erected on Breaksea Island, about seven miles E.S.E. of Prince of Wales' harbour, King George's sound, the other at the mouth of that harbour. The governor of the colony asked me, both of my subalterns having gone home the previous year, to go to Albany to arrange for their erection. This involved a journey of two hundred and fifty miles each way through the bush. I travelled in a spring cart, with a sergeant of sappers, who was to take charge of the work, and a driver, a free man. We had three horses, but one of them broke his tether rope when we were about seventy miles on our journey, and went back to the run where he was bred. It was the end of the dry season, the ground was like a stone, and having no natives with us we lost him for the time, and had to the remaining hundred and eighty miles with the two other horses. Had the carter known, as he ought to have known, where the horse had been bred, we should have got him at once, for his run was within twenty-five miles of where he broke loose, and he went straight home.

The lighthouse on Breaksea was erected by a party of forty convicts, who had been working on the Perth-Albany road. They were looked after by one warder and the sergeant of sappers. The lighthouse at the mouth of the harbour was erected by contract. Both were lighted on the 1st January, 1858.

The island was hardly approachable; there was always a swell on, no harbour of any sort, and landing had at first to be effected by jumping from the stern of a whale-boat backed close in to the smooth water-worn rocks, with the possibility of missing one's jump and tumbling into deep water, and with the further possibility of being detained on the island if the wind got up quickly. A projecting timber landing-stage, erected by a wandering American, who had been putting up timber bridges for the Government, got rid of these difficulties, and enabled the Commissariat at Albany to feed the party on the island, and also made it possible, with a derrick, to land the heavy cast-iron plates, of which the tower of the lighthouse was to be constructed. The only inhabitants were sea-birds, which bred there in great numbers, and small marsupial rats—these last, judging by the difficulty of protecting the stores of food and by the number the men killed, being in millions. I fancy they lived on the roots of the rushes with which the island was almost everywhere covered. There was some water on the island, and the sea round it was full of snapper and other fish.

After staying at Albany three weeks and completing all the arrangements for the work, the carter and I returned. In the interval the rainy season had begun, and parts of the road, *i.e.*, a track merely cleared, bridged and made passable in the softest places, were so heavy that towards the end of the journey the horses were pretty well played out. When we reached a roadside

### 372 *Life in a Convict Colony Thirty-Five Years Ago.*

public about fifteen miles from Perth, I started to walk to that place, but changed my mind and turned off to Fremantle. On arriving at the bridge over the Canning River, I found it had been burnt down, and as I did not care to turn back I walked along the river, which, in this neighbourhood at this time, was a deep, quick-running ditch, too wide to jump, looking for some way of getting across, and soon found a gum sapling which had fallen across the stream. It was very thin at the other end, but going at it quickly I nearly reached the other bank before it broke, and I got wet only up to the waist. After I had walked some miles, I remembered that I should have to pass through a camp of ticket-of-leave men, who were making their living by splitting shingles and sawing timber. I did not like it, as I had no arms and about forty sovereigns in my pocket. I thought of burying them with my watch and coming back for them next day, but any strolling native would certainly have found them, so finally I cut a big stick and walked on. Very soon after dark I came to the camp, and seeing no one moving about the fires, which were some fifty yards on each side of the track, I decided to go on, and passed without being heard. Of course, the only danger from these men lay in the temptation to rob, as they could hardly have failed to guess that I had money about me.

Reaching my cottage—at this time I was alone—without warning, I found my servant, who had received his conditional pardon before I left for Albany, and might, if he had chosen, have gone off with all my portable property, waiting for me. He immediately asked me if I had been paid for a horse I had sold just before starting for Albany, the purchaser having gone bankrupt while I was away. I had been paid. When I was leaving the colony I sent this man to the Cape, and in addition to an ordinary character, gave him a full statement of what I knew of his history. I did this because I thought he might be recognized as, or suspected of having been a convict, and I told him in this case to show the statement to his employer if he thought he could trust him. I heard from him for two years afterwards, and he was then in the service of the commanding Royal Engineer at the Cape, and doing well. Then his letters ceased and I never heard of him again.

Whether he was guilty of arson under a strong sense of injury or not, he was a faithful servant to me.

I left the colony early in 1858 in an empty convict ship, and in due course arrived, *via* Ceylon and the Red Sea, in London. On reporting myself to Colonel (afterwards Sir J. W.) Gordon, of Crimean celebrity, he took an old atlas off one of his shelves, and opening it at the map of Australia, said, "Show me where you have come from."

## A HAVEN OF GOLD.

By FRANCES SELOUS.

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"LADY CHARLOTTE CRADDOCK presents her compliments to Messrs. Crump and Crushit.

"Her ladyship encloses her photograph, as she is desirous of pointing out to Messrs. Crump and Crushit the fact that she possesses a remarkably fine figure and elegant appearance, being in fact known as a 'fashionable beauty,' and would therefore at any time be a very good advertisement for any really stylish milliner or tailor. Owing to the extreme depression in the value of land which has naturally resulted in the diminution of the incomes of the nobility and aristocracy, Lady Charlotte Craddock proposes that Messrs. Crump and Crushit should make an arrangement to provide her ladyship with costumes for the rest of the season, her ladyship's recommendations in the very best society to be considered in lieu of other or pecuniary remuneration. Lady Charlotte Craddock incloses half-a-dozen cards of invitation for one week, that Messrs. Crump and Crushit may feel assured that all recommendations will be in the very best quarters. Perhaps Messrs. Crump and Crushit will be interested in knowing that Madame Sidonie supplied her ladyship, on the same conditions, with a court dress for the first Drawing-room this season, and that the dress was described in *Fiction*, *The Spheres*, and in fact in all the smartest journals, and that Sidonie received nearly a dozen orders for the next Drawing-room in consequence of the descriptions already mentioned of Lady Charlotte's appearance."

Mr. Crump—short, puffy and very glossy with pomade and finest broadcloth, and resplendent with beaming face, patent leather boots, diamond rings and ruby and diamond scarf-pin—touched an electric bell which summoned a clerk into his august presence.

"Send me the shorthand clerk," he said.

There was a knock at the door, and the shorthand writer entered.

"Sit down, Brown, and write as I dictate," said Crump, of Crump and Crushit, ladies' tailors and outfitters to H.R.H. the Princess of Wales, &c., &c., New Bond Street, W.

"MADAM,

"Mr. Crump begs me respectfully to inform you that, as he has upon his books many very pretty and solvent ladies

moving in the best society, who patronize his art and pay their bills, he can enter into no engagement to provide your ladyship with costumes for the season. Nevertheless, if your ladyship would like to call upon Mr. Crump at 11 a.m. on Monday next, which hour will be convenient to him, he will see if he thinks it would be of any service to the firm to come to any arrangement with your ladyship.

"I remain, Madam,

"Yours respectfully,

"*pro* CRUMP AND CRUSHIT."

Lady Charlotte Craddock was only twenty-six years of age, and had enjoyed the reputation of being a fashionable beauty for seven years. The fourth of Lord Eglinton's seven unmarried daughters, seeing no chance of ever tasting the joys of a season in town while her three elder sisters remained still unmarried, and feeling that as her years already numbered eighteen she would be *passée* and "quite too frightfully elderly" before it could possibly be her turn to be presented, she made the most of her opportunities at afternoon tea during the autumn, so that before the end of the shooting season, Colonel Sir Algernon Craddock had formally asked for her hand and had been accepted as son-in-law by Lord and Lady Eglinton, who congratulated themselves upon having been able to establish a daughter so well without any of the expenses of presentation or season in London.

Lady Charlotte Craddock was presented upon her marriage, and immediately took a foremost place among that season's belles.

In the autumn, her husband's regiment was ordered to Fizabad, an Indian station in the province of Oude. As a dutiful wife, Lady Charlotte accompanied her husband to India; but as she found life unendurable in the station, she soon formed the opinion that the heat was injurious to her health, and discovered that her constitution had already suffered severely from the trying effects of the climate and that it was absolutely necessary for her to fly to the hills for the benefit of her health. There the purer air, heavily charged with the flirtation which ever flourishes in Indian hill stations, apparently had a very beneficial, though not lasting, effect upon her health; for it seemed to be necessary that Lady Charlotte Craddock should spend the greater portion of the year at Tucoori, or the Happy Vale, where her solitude was relieved by the society and attentions of Mr. Loftus Brackenbury, a young cavalry officer, who was able to enjoy invalid leave with sufficient health and spirits to inaugurate a flirtation with the belle of the station, and to waltz at every informal dance, of which there are always many in hill stations, hastily arranged with a view to beguiling the weariness of lone married women whose husbands are away in the plains. At these



little dances it soon became a matter of course for Mr. Brackenbury and Lady Charlotte to waltz together through a very large percentage of the programme; and if during her stay in India, love-letters and keepsakes crept mysteriously into Lady Charlotte's dressing-case, her elderly husband was so unobservant and seemed to care so little, that it really served him right. So said Lady Charlotte in answer to the time and novel-honoured still, small voice, &c.

Sir Algernon Craddock had but two years more to serve in India, and at the expiration of that period he and Lady Charlotte left the station in which his wife had spent so many dreary days, and in whose adjacent station had occurred the one small shred of romance that could be said to have entered into her life. When she left India, Lady Charlotte bewailed her separation from the one man she had ever loved. It had been delightful to her to arrange stolen interviews and preconcerted meetings that should appear unexpected; and the excitement consequent on the acting necessitated by such enterprises gave to the attainment of her end a zest and an intoxication which she enjoyed to the uttermost.

Lady Charlotte Craddock tried to lessen the hardship of separation by correspondence. A bomb launched by a discharged maid in the shape of an anonymous letter inclosing a few specimens of this correspondence informed Sir Algernon that his beautiful wife had deceived him. He promptly altered his will and instituted proceedings for divorce; but he met his death in the hunting field before Sir James Hannen could hear the case that might have furnished the papers with so many sensational paragraphs and so much matter for witty comment; and might have afforded the middle and lower middle classes, through the medium of those papers, a short insight into the ways and manners of the upper classes, and regaled their curiosity with the refined and elegant phraseology and the purity of diction which from time to time delight the curious commonalty who read the reports of divorces in high life.

Before she was twenty-five, Lady Charlotte Craddock, in a tulle head-dress which set the fashion in widows' caps for some years, bewailed the loss of her husband and the property which he had left, with the exception of her very modest settlement, to the distant cousin who succeeded to his baronetcy.

Unwilling to return to her father's house and play second fiddle to her unmarried sisters, Lady Charlotte resolved to content herself with a very small establishment in Mayfair. A tiny house squeezed into a corner near the Park and elbowing a mews, swallowed up over £200 a year, leaving a balance of £400, and credit, with which to maintain the small establishment, half brougham-victoria, wondrous dresses and bonnets, &c., &c. Of course, this style of living must lead to debt and difficulty; but Lady



Charlotte, whose portrait had been three times in the Grosvenor, and whose appearance was continually being commented upon in society papers and fashion magazines, relied upon making a good second match before she should have plunged very deeply into debt.

But Fortune had not lately favoured Lady Charlotte, inasmuch as she had been a widow two years and no eligible match had offered, and she had found it hard to live in accordance with what she considered the necessities of her rank and position and keep her head above the growing current of debt. It was after contemplating many expediciencies that she addressed her somewhat startling proposal to Messrs. Crump and Crushit.

"Insolent wretch! I wish that I could afford to order a dress and pay for it, that I might let the creature know his proper place, and not allow him to make an appointment to suit his own odious convenience." So thought Lady Charlotte, but, nevertheless, she wrote a dainty little note to express herself willing to grant Mr. Crump an interview at the hour he mentioned.

Before seeing Lady Charlotte Craddock, Mr. Crump had been careful to obtain ample *renseignements* upon the subject of her social position and reputation. His head buyer, as a man much about town and likely to hear all the *on dits* in high life, had been instructed to find out what he could about her. His inquiries resulted in the unanimous verdict "that there was no doubt about it, she was A 1; had been on the Prince's drag at Sandown last autumn; had worn a thirty-five guinea dress from Redfern's for the occasion; hadn't paid for it; didn't mean to. Didn't seem to pay for anything, and yet seemed to live pretty comfortable—French cook, &c. Was supposed to have gone the pace in India, so was cut off with a shilling by her husband, who had been dead two years."

Armed with these facts, Mr. Crump was able to receive Lady Charlotte with an easy affability and cool familiarity with her circumstances that made her writhe, although ladies of her class who talk of "being in blue funks," and "cheeking servant maids" cannot be supposed to possess a very great amount of sensibility or delicacy of feeling.

Mr. Crump offered his lovely guest an easy chair, and sat down in another himself with the air of being quite ready for a chat with an old and valued friend. In one hand he held a popular social journal; in the other he held the packet of invitation cards which Lady Charlotte had sent him.

"Well, now, with regard to making you an occasional dress or so, let us just see how we stand. You are certainly a very good figure; everybody knows that. I should make your waist three-quarters of an inch smaller; your shoulders require it. No doubt you would allow that. Now here is a card from Lady Dorkess. Certainly she's quite the thing, but your visiting her wouldn't

help our firm. I don't suppose she ever wore a dress that wouldn't be a disgrace to a West End tradesman. Lady — and Hon. Mrs. — h'm, h'm." Mr. Crump threw down the cards one after the other. "All these are well enough in their way, but they wouldn't help us. One of my men tells me that you were on the Prince's drag at Sandown. Now *that's* what I call good business. Everybody looks at you. 'That's a neat figure, and what a fit! Who makes her dresses?' &c.; and then Mrs. Brown, of Clapham, and Mrs. Robinson, of Brixton, cut off the nursery rice puddings for a few months, and put their husbands on short commons and come and order dresses that never look their worth on 'em, and flatter themselves that they look exactly like Lady Charlotte Craddock. Have you read this paragraph?"

Lady Charlotte took the paper that Mr. Crump held out, and she saw that there was a paragraph marked with a large cross in ink.

Lady Charlotte read: "The Prince of Wales honoured the Bataille des Fleurs with his presence. H.R.H. looked very well, and apparently enjoyed extremely good health. He paid considerable attention to Miss Dollers, the latest American beauty, who, it is rumoured, will take a place among the reigning belles in English society during the coming season. I have it on very good authority that H.R.H. threw a bunch of gardenias—said to have been grown in the Sandringham hothouses—into Miss Dollers' victoria as it passed the royal equipage."

"Do you know Miss Dollers, Lady Charlotte?"

"No, she is not in my set."

"Well then, just you look here. You get to know Miss Dollers, you bring her here and let her give me a good order, and I'll dress you for the rest of the season—that's a bargain. I'll make you a dress for Ascot or for Hurlingham, or for wherever you are likely to meet her, and then if you bring her here I'll dress you for the rest of the season. You shall be measured to-day, and directly you send me the card of invitation, or the engagement whatever it may be, the dress shall be put in hand directly. Nothing for nothing in business, you know. Now, are you agreeable to that?"

Lady Charlotte would have liked to be haughty, but her doubtful position as party to such an arrangement disarmed all haughtiness on her side, and she was fain to agree to the tailor's stipulations. Mr. Crump, of Crump and Crushit, was very pleased to pay off, in part at least, on the person of Lady Charlotte Craddock the score of all former grudges in the shape of aristocratic rudeness that he owed to her class in general.

Lady Charlotte's resources were at a very low ebb; with the exception of the rent of her house and servants' wages, she contrived to live entirely upon credit. What little ready money she possessed *en outre* her jointure, which did not go very far in the

style of living she affected, was obtained by writing paragraphs for fashion magazines and borrowing. She felt very low-spirited as she drove away from Messrs. Crump and Crushit's, after her interview with the head of the firm. She had gained her end, but at what a price! She would have to unearth this American girl, who was probably vulgar, take her up for some little time at least, and then perhaps she would not be easy to drop. But, first of all, there might be some difficulty in the unearthing.

Lady Charlotte ordered some tea and a luncheon tray to be taken to her boudoir, a much be-wadded and be-draped stained-glass-windowed cupboard, squeezed into a corner of the staircase. Here she sat down to meditate upon her situation. The result of her meditation was that she ordered her carriage for four o'clock, and resolved to call upon a person whom she denominated "her favourite pal." As a single, motherless girl, Lady Cardington had been Lady Charlotte's bosom friend and confidante in India before she had achieved the great match which had made her a peeress.

This friend was at home, and Lady Charlotte was shown into an equally be-wadded and be-draped though much larger boudoir than the one she had just left.

After the usual feminine embraces had been exchanged, Lady Charlotte stated her case with slight modifications:—"She was very anxious to meet Miss Dollers, the new American beauty. Some one had told her that she was such a sweet creature, and Lady Charlotte felt quite drawn to her, and was determined to know her. Could Edith help her?"

"Well, my dear, I'll try. I wonder if his lordship is in London; he may know her, or some of her friends."

Lady Cardington rang the bell. "Will you inquire if his lordship dines at home to-day?"

The footman, with well-bred imperturbability, answered that "his lordship had been at Newmarket since the day before yesterday, and was not to be expected until late next day, his lordship had told Harris."

"Then you don't get on with his lordship very well, my dear, I am afraid," said Lady Charlotte, who really liked her dearest friend.

"Oh, yes, dear, I do. I always do my duty to him. I look pretty and order dinner, and he confides in his butler, and not in me, which is rather an advantage, as I am afraid I should find his confidences rather vapid, with a tendency to be decidedly more horsey than I should consider quite interesting. But now, what is to be done about this American? Do you belong to the Primrose League?"

"Oh, yes, I am a Dame, Harbinger, or a Queen's Councillor, or something or other, with a brooch."

"Very well then, Miss Dollers is sure to be one too. All Americans and parvenus who want to get into society begin with

the Primrose League. You write to her and say you want to confer with her upon the subject of election work. Find her address in the subscription lists, and write to her."

"Thanks for the hint. I'll do that. Good-bye. Thanks awfully. Are you dining alone?"

"No; Captain Vanbrugh is coming to dinner, and I am going to take him with me to Lady Dorkess. By the bye, do you know that Captain Brackenbury is on his way home?"

"No; is he?" asked Lady Charlotte, with well-feigned surprise, which might have deceived any one except a confidential female friend.

"Evidently she has *not* forgotten him," thought Lady Cardington.

Lady Charlotte had not forgotten Captain Brackenbury. She had in her possession a letter from him announcing his intention of leaving India, and giving the date on which a letter would reach him at Suez, and she had written to Suez a letter in which she told him of the joy which she would experience in seeing him again, in impassioned language of which few would have believed the fashionable beauty capable.

"I wonder if he really knows how much I care for him," she thought. "People think me shallow and only capable of a flirtation *pour passer le temps*, because I married a man twice my age for the sake of getting out of the nursery. I don't suppose they know how delightful it is to wear pinafores and have one's hair down one's back, and dine in the schoolroom long after one's fully grown up, just because one's two elder sisters 'hang on hand,' as mamma used to say. I wonder if I were to marry him, now that I am free, whether I should be happy. It would mean living at Chatham or some other horrid place, and contriving and managing; and being waited on by one's husband's orderly—a curious sort of object, neither soldier, servant, nor good red herring—and a one-horse carriage drawn by my husband's charger, when he could spare it. *Je m'en doute*. Poor Loftus! If only he were rich and could pay *all* my debts, how happy we might be together."

Lady Charlotte acted upon her friend's advice, and wrote a gracious little note to Miss Dollers, in which Lady Charlotte Craddock presented her compliments to Miss Dollers, &c., and begged that Miss Dollers would be so kind as to call upon her to discuss the election work of the habitation to which they both belonged.

Miss Letitia Dollers swallowed the bait willingly, and not unconsciously. "I guess I am going to be the boom of the season, and Lady Charlotte likes to be in the front," she thought, as she despatched a reply.

Lady Charlotte gushed very sweetly and with high-bred gentleness; Letitia Dollers gushed with Yankee *brusquerie*; and they parted friends.

When Lady Charlotte accepted her annual invitation from Lord Addlepayte to spend Ascot week at Addlepayte Villa, near Ascot Heath, she asked if she might bring her young friend Miss Dollers, a favour which was willingly granted, and Lady Charlotte was able to present herself to Mr. Crump armed with the honourable and noble lord's letter. Mr. Crump undertook to send Lady Charlotte a couple of dresses: a *chef d'œuvre* for the first and third day, and for the Cup day a conception in mushroom-colour which should make all other well-dressed women green with envy.

Letitia Dollers was sufficiently delighted at the receipt of her invitation to be very amenable to *all* Lady Charlotte's plans, and at her suggestion drove to Bond Street in her ladyship's dainty victoria, the maintenance of which was a marvel to the few who suspected the real state of her exchequer. After a long and solemn consultation with Mr. Crump, Junior, whose taste was said to be the guiding star of the firm, Miss Dollers gave an order for costumes for the Ascot week on so lavish a scale that Lady Charlotte felt quite sure of dresses on her own account for the rest of the season.

Miss Dollers was residing at the Métropole Hotel, and was very anxious to make Lady Charlotte known to a compatriot staying in the same hotel, Mr. Josiah Washington Potts, quondam pork exporter in the Far West, now millionaire and gentleman, doing Europe, and bent on the purchase of a country seat in England, old furniture, a pedigree, aristocratic wife, and, if possible, baronetage. Of the likelihood of his obtaining this last he was sometimes doubtful, of the others absolutely sure.

A small banquet was inaugurated in the American's dining-room on the ground-floor of the "Métropole," at which Lady Charlotte consented to be present, and also consented to send out invitations to a few of her own friends, as Mr. Josiah Washington Potts was not richly dowered with acquaintance in London and was anxious to get into the very best society, "the corner lot," he called it. As this was a convenient manner of paying debts in the shape of dinners owing to people whom she did not much care about, Lady Charlotte was able to gather together a dozen or so wealthy, well-dressed people. Not her best friends, not the *crème de la crème*, but a few of those people who prostrated themselves at her feet in their endeavour to secure at their parties the presence of a fashionable beauty, who was known to have been admired by H.R.H.

Lady Charlotte and the friends came and feasted at the American's expense, flattered him upon the elegance of the dinner and looked askance at Letitia Dollers—that American thing in whom they saw so little to admire, and whose portraits they were sick of seeing in all the West End shops. All agreed in wondering why Lady Charlotte had taken her up, and some even declared that they knew as a fact that Miss Dollers had paid her a large sum

down to introduce her to her friends. None guessed the truth. There are wheels within wheels in the best society.

Letitia Dollers was a great success at Ascot, and Lady Charlotte was fain to rejoice over her arrangement with Mr. Crump. Her own mushroom-coloured gown was described in all the papers. Lured by the double magnet of Lady Charlotte Craddock and the more novel attraction of the beauty whom the knowing ones declared that H.R.H. had discovered at Cannes, and thus created, and of whom the same knowing ones asserted that H.R.H. had avowed that he would rather have discovered her than the whole continent of America, the choicest sprigs of nobility and the great ones of the land hovered about Lord Addlepayte's drag. Young Lord Callow's team of blacks and exquisitely-matched grooms passed unnoticed, and the reigning beauty of last year bit the tips of her *Suède* gloves in anger and despair at the sight of the fickle crowd with field glasses levelled and forefingers pointed at the new beauty of the season.

Before the last days of June Mr. Washington Potts had bought from its noble and impoverished owner the Tudor mansion and park known as Reminshall Abbey, Bucks. Here, in the early days of July, Mr. Potts intended to inaugurate his career as a lord of the soil. He had put the Abbey in the hands of a West End upholsterer, who had renovated whatever it was possible to renovate in the furniture, and had fitted up the Tudor building with electric light, and had done all that lay in his power to modernize and hotelify the venerable edifice. A most superior brigade of smart maidservants, lofty footmen, and an affable archangel of a butler, engaged by the house agent, amply furnished forth the servants' hall and housekeeper's room. Prancing bays, blacks and roans filled the stabling for eight horses; and half-a-dozen carriages, newly designed, and built on the latest lines, and emblazoned with the crest of a griffin rampant, which Mr. Potts had recently discovered at the College of Heraldry that he was entitled to bear for the sum of eighty guineas, filled the coach-houses. The "*Mayflower*," a spick-and-span steam-launch, was moored in a boat-house built on a backwater of the Thames, down to whose flowery banks stretched the lands of Reminshall Abbey. The griffin ramped on massive services of silver, glass, table linen, and cutlery. Wherever a crest *could* be placed a griffin appeared. From the chimneys and gutter-spouts, over which griffins hovered, to the ground glass windows of the butler's pantry, on which griffins were engraved, the new-made Washington Potts crest was obtrusively conspicuous.

This lordly pleasure dome and all its appendages Mr. Washington Potts had bought for himself, but before he could enjoy himself in it he required to see it filled with an elegant and well-dressed mob. To obtain this end Josiah consulted Lady Charlotte Craddock. He



went to call upon her one morning towards the end of June, and found her pale and exhausted. She had not yet recovered from an alarming interview with an irate jobmaster, who had supplied her with the pretty bays that drew her half brougham and victoria and who now threatened summonses and county courts, and —most terrible of all—threatened to send a man to take away the bays then and there unless Lady Charlotte paid him the trifling sum of £400, due by her to him for horse hire. Lady Charlotte promised to send a cheque on account by the end of the week, and rehearsed the gamut of equivocations used by people who live on credit, but Mr. Buck, of Buck and Jibb, jobmasters and horse dealers, Oxford Street, W., was not so easily pacified. "You let me 'ave a cheque for two 'undred on account before I close my office at five o'clock this afternoon, and I'll leave my 'osses in your stable; you don't, and I'll send my man for them bays, and even if they are in the Row I'll 'ave the 'arness took off and leave the carriage there. When I says a thing, I means it, and I mean that," and Mr. Buck had departed, leaving Lady Charlotte to face the full awfulness of the demand. A balance of £70 at her banker's and £200 to be paid before nightfall. It was horrid. For a few moments Lady Charlotte gave herself up to despair, but at the end of half-an-hour she had formed a desperate resolution. At first she had almost entertained the idea of failing to pay and letting the horses be taken, but the recollections of Hurlingham, where she had an engagement that very afternoon, the Row, and the thousand and one occasions when horses and a carriage are absolutely indispensable, made that impossible. No, Lady Charlotte would go to a money-lender. She knew they were disreputable, and knew that they would cheat her; but she must trust in Providence or her own wits to save her from possible worry in the future, and she must provide for the inexorable Now.

Lady Charlotte put on her oldest tailor-gown and drove in a hansom to the office of a member of the tribe of Levi, whose shining brass door-plate announced him to be a solicitor, but whose name and appearance suggested usury. After a great amount of discussion and explanation, Mr. Abraham Levi stated that he had no ready money on hand and was himself, indeed, not a money-lender, but would act in that capacity on behalf of a friend who had some few hundreds to invest. When Lady Charlotte left his office, Mr. Levi had undertaken to send a trustworthy clerk with notes for £300 to her house at three o'clock, the earliest hour by which the obliging friend could be communicated with, and his client had signed an agreement to pay monthly instalments of a hundred pounds with interest added until the debt should be paid off, the first payment to be made one month from the date of the signing of the agreement. The Hebrew solicitor, who only asked a moderate commission for his assistance, drew up an agreement so shrouded in technicalities that Lady Charlotte read and signed it in utter



unconsciousness of the fact that she was undertaking to pay 180 per cent. for the accommodation.

Lady Charlotte sent notes for £200 to Messrs. Buck and Jibb and reserved £100 for her personal use, trusting that she could ward off all large payments until the end of the season at least.

Wearied with the unusual business of the morning Lady Charlotte leaned back in a low saddlebag lounge seat and gently fanned herself as she greeted Mr. Josiah Washington Potts.

"I hear you have bought the Reminshall estate?"

"Yes, I guess I am boss of Reminshall Abbey and park. I've fixed it up and it's all comfortable now. There's a tower at one end, supposed to date from Stephen; well, I've had an elevator fitted there; electric light, electric indicators, complete telephonic communication. In fact you wouldn't know the old hole again; and now I want your ladyship to come down and stay a few weeks, or as long as you like, and to ask a party. I've asked all the people that you brought to my dinner; but they won't half fill the place; and I want to have relays of company, one batch after another, as one reads about your regular swells in the society papers. They are a sort of catechism for us self-made men and show us the way we should go if we want to be fashionable."

"Just so. But surely, my dear Mr. Potts, you have friends of your own? A man of your wealth must have made lots of friends?" answered Lady Charlotte languidly, not taking the trouble to appear interested.

"Oh, of course I've made friends among speculators and that, but they aren't what I want to know. I want the A1 brand as we used to say in the West, and I know you can bring them. I've bought a launch, and the coach that I have ordered will be down in a week; there shall be illuminations, water-parties, a ball, anything you like. You just give the word of command, and I'll see that it's done."

"It is very flattering of you to ask me, of course; but you must allow me to consider the matter. I am feeling rather exhausted now, so I regret that I cannot ask you to luncheon, but call again in a few days' time and I will let you know. Good-bye, dear Mr. Potts."

Lady Charlotte did not at first intend to accede to the American's request that she should invite her friends to his house; but a certain unanimity among her tradespeople in sending in their bills with urgent reminders during these few last days of the season, together with the threatening tones of some who declined to take any further orders until they received a settlement in full, made her decide to go to Reminshall.

"Anything would be better," she thought, "than staying here to be pestered with their letters. I can't pay them and they must know that I can't! What do they want? They can't put me in prison I suppose; or half the nobility would be in prison. Directly

I get my dividends I shall give these harpies something on account. I am sure they can't expect me to do more. I would go to the Continent, only one can't travel on credit. I suppose I had better oblige Mr. Potts." Lady Charlotte pronounced the honourable name of Potts as she might have swallowed a tonic.

So Lady Charlotte invited a large party of friends and acquaintance to meet her at Reminshall, first explaining the strange circumstances of a wealthy man, owner of a beautiful country seat and eager to fill his house with people, and yet not possessing friends enough to occupy half the spare bedrooms.

Lady Charlotte's set jeered at Mr. Washington Potts, spoke of the absurdity of the thing, and with few exceptions accepted his invitations. There were rumours of a pastoral play to be performed in the open air, and as respect for the salt is an Eastern fad and not a European fact the guests arrived bent upon amusing themselves and on being entertained, and determined to ignore all obligation to their entertainer.

Given the disposition to make merry and the wherewithal to do so, and the results are likely to be satisfactory. There were excursions by water organized with the greatest skill and precision by Mr. Potts. He was once overheard to say in disclaiming a compliment upon the subject that a man who had personally superintended the shipping of 10,000 hogs ought to be equal to shipping a few dozen swells. There were garden parties and tennis parties, dances and charades, and all Mr. Washington Potts' guests declared that Reminshall Abbey was a delightful place to stay at. But they were apt in quiet moments when the master of the house was absent to gather into little groups and discuss his peculiarities.

"The creature is so candidly vulgar," said one.

"I wonder why Lady Charlotte touts for him; she seems quite to have taken him up. He isn't in her set; I know—in fact I don't think he is in any set at all. Do you think she means to marry him for his money?"

"I should hardly think so. They say he was a pork butcher in America. Then there was Lady Charlotte's affair in India, don't you know."

"Do you think that means anything? there always are affairs in India, don't you know, when young women go out with their husbands. So much scandal and backbiting and so little else to do, they are obliged to take refuge in flirtation." And the conversation drifted away from Lady Charlotte and her intentions.

At Mr. Washington Potts' request Lady Charlotte had undertaken the entire arrangement of the outdoor play, which was to be as near perfection as it was possible for a play upon whose production neither expense nor trouble but only genius was spared.

Lady Charlotte found most irksome the task of arranging the *al fresco* performance. The unsatisfactory state of her own affairs

made life wearisome, and the effort of joining in conversation and appearing or endeavouring to appear amused and interested soon became intolerable. The morning's post had become a thing to be dreaded and to be awaited in fear and trembling through a sleepless night. There was a sickening unanimity about her creditors. Then Crump, whom she had looked upon as her slave from the moment she had introduced Miss Dollers, had discovered that the erewhile run-after beauty was a Yankee adventuress, a New York milliner's assistant who had paid for her passage and return passage with her savings, and had arrived in England with only a few pounds and the *kudos* resulting from distinguished admiration to support her. For a few months she had been, in her own words, a big boom and had lived on credit. This credit exhausted she left the shores of Britain to indulge on the other side of the pond in many a hearty laugh at the guileless Britishers who had blindly mistaken her uncultured vulgarity for American wit.

Mad with rage when his gigantic bill was returned to him from Miss Dollers' address at the "Métropole," bearing the legend in red ink, "Left; address not known," the senior partner in Crump and Crushit wrote to Lady Charlotte Craddock to inform her ladyship that as he had lost considerably by her introduction of Miss Dollers ("as though I had wished to introduce the minx!" thought Lady Charlotte indignantly) he felt that he had a right to expect that her ladyship would help him to meet that loss by paying for the dresses that he had then in preparation. He had charged as little as possible and enclosed an account for the two dresses for the theatrical performance. Ordinarily the price asked would be eighty guineas. He would only charge seventy, and he expected a cheque immediately. The costumes would be sent by a special messenger to whom Lady Charlotte might intrust the cheque, as he would receive orders not to leave the Abbey without payment. This letter in conjunction with her utter inability to comply with its demands increased those sensations that made life and the preparations for the play a burden almost too great to bear.

As of late years charity has proved a very convenient social stepping-stone, Lady Charlotte suggested to Mr. Washington Potts that charity should be made the *raison d'être* of the performance. A ritualistic vicar of a neighbouring parish was soon found and easily persuaded that the cause of Ritualism required that in his little tumble-down and moss-grown church, with its ancient square tower lop-sided and sinking sideways into the soil, the mouldering horse-box pews should be replaced by open Gothic benches, that the damp and woolly-toned harmonium should retire in favour of an American organ. In fact, that the whole of the interior of the parish church of Sleepston, which had begun life as a Roman Catholic chapel, which had been whitewashed under Cromwell, and generally uglified by succeeding generations of

Low Church vicars, should now be beautified and transformed into a temple of Ritualism.

There was to be no vulgar *réclame*, no one was to canvass the charity. A short paragraph in one of the best papers only would make it known that there was to be an open-air performance for the purpose of raising money for a local charity, that *fauteuils* would be three guineas, that a family ticket to admit three would be five guineas, that a special train would leave Paddington, and that two or three dozen of the more distinguished spectators would be entertained at luncheon by the master of Reminshall Abbey.

Lady Charlotte had the disposal of the tickets, and within a few days of the announcement of the performance the greater number of seats had been taken. The charge was so high people who thought ten shillings and sixpence dear for a stall at the Lyceum, felt sure the performance, although amateur, must be really worth seeing, and people not in society rushed at the bait, and a very few in society and a few on the immediate outskirts received complimentary tickets and were invited to the luncheon.

A play of the Elizabethan era was unearthed and clothed in chaste modern garb by a penniless and aristocratic younger son, who affected long hair, weird garments and a literary turn of mind, and made a little money and a great repute in his own family by contributing paragraphs to weekly papers, and who annually wrote a very weak and mystic novel, devoured by a class of reader with an appetite for anything written by an Honourable, baronet, or lady of title.

At the last rehearsals the play went smoothly, inasmuch as all the actors knew their parts. When the last rehearsal was over Lady Charlotte left the *dramatis personæ* with a weary sigh. She walked rapidly through the hall, and seeing all of the rooms occupied, fled to a small room of studious aspect, fitted up with a collection of such solid and classic literature as made Mr. Washington Potts shudder. This, of a more private nature than the rest of the sitting-rooms, had been placed exclusively at Lady Charlotte's disposal as the most distinguished guest. Like all Yankees, Mr. Potts rejoiced in a pair of pistols manufactured with all the latest improvements in deadliness. These were kept on his library table in a case, which in itself was a thing of beauty. Lady Charlotte sat down near the table, and drew the case towards her. She thought of her difficulties, of her endless struggles with insolvency and of the taste for luxury, which she felt to be her ruling passion, and for the things which only wealth can purchase, and without which she felt that for her life would always be unendurable, and she opened the inlaid case and took out one of the glittering weapons. "Perhaps, after all, *this* would be the most honourable *finale*; but I haven't the courage, I am too great a coward." Lady Charlotte put back the pistol and pushed the case away.

"No, I have not sufficient courage to do it." And then came the voice of the tempter, suggesting a temporary escape from her difficulties. The money for the charity; there it was in her jewel-case. The entertainment was in her patronage, and all the takings had been paid over to her. There was £120 in notes and gold in her room; easy to appropriate this, and tell the astute Mr. Potts that the cost of the production had swamped the takings. In the triumph of success he would be only too glad to give a cheque to the vicar, and would say no more about it. But then he might divine the truth, and he *was* so vulgar; it would be so dreadful to be under an obligation to a man who out-Yankeed even the conventional Yankee of comic drama.

Expectation was on tiptoe on the morrow. All the *dramatis personæ* were people of more or less renown, demi-celebrities, *quasi* literary men, pretty wives of celebrated artists, &c., &c. And all were anxious to distinguish themselves before an audience that had paid so much for their seats that they meant to be critical.

Early in the morning Lady Charlotte's dresses arrived from Messrs. Crump and Crushit, and her maid came to inform her that there was a gentleman from Messrs. Crump's, who said that his orders were that he was to see Lady Charlotte before he left.

After a lengthy parley with the Bond Street tailors' minion, who refused to leave the house unpaid, Lady Charlotte was fain to do that from the thought of which she had shrunk yesterday. She took £70 from the charity money, and paid and dismissed the tailor. Armed with the stamped receipt she returned to the sunny sitting-room adjoining her bedroom. Through the window she could see the preparations in progress for the play. It was a sunny, cloudless day in July. All nature looked glad, presently Lady Charlotte must be looking glad and happy.

"What fools we women of fashion are! *Why* can't I live on a few hundreds a year and be happy? But I can't, I can't. I should literally pine anywhere except in a house in Mayfair during the season. I don't set so much store as many ladies do on dress, but I never could be happy in a dress made by a second-rate tailor. I despise myself for accepting hospitality from this vulgar American, but my own folly, my extravagance, has made it necessary. I wonder if there are any people coming to see this play who feel as wretched as I do." Lady Charlotte went into her dressing-room and looked searchingly at her reflection in the glass; she wondered if in unguarded moments she ever looked as wretched as she felt. She smiled at the reflection and moved her lips in a polite murmur, "Yes, I can still look happy though I can't feel it. And that money I have taken to pay that wretched tailor! I suppose I must sell the few remaining diamonds that I possess and refund it. Every one will know how miserably poor I am then. It will be dreadful to wear no rings except a wedding ring and a guard like a lodging-house keeper."

In the midst of her reflections the smart and tight-waisted young person who waited on her knocked at the door.

"I won't dress now, Howden, I shan't come down to breakfast," Lady Charlotte said, as the maid entered. "Bring me a cup of tea, and you can say I am studying my part."

She would certainly need all her energy to play her social part from luncheon to midnight, as well as the dramatic rôle, so Lady Charlotte had resolved to husband her powers.

"I beg your pardon, your ladyship, but there's another young man downstairs says he must see you, and, if you please, here is his card."

The maid gave her a thin, badly-printed card, suggesting the Crystal Palace or Brighton Pier advertisements of "Ladies' and gents' visiting cards, 50 while you wait, one shilling."

Lady Charlotte read :

"Mr. Isaac Hart,"

and under the name was written in pencil,

"From Mr. Abraham Levi."

"Tell him I am engaged and cannot see him, but will write and make an appointment."

"He says he won't stir until he has seen your ladyship."

"You can show him into the study, I will see him there." Lady Charlotte tied the ribbons of her embroidered morning-gown angrily. "These people will drive me mad," she muttered, "and it is my own doing. That is the dreadful part of it."

Lady Charlotte Craddock looked very firm and resolute as she opened the door of the study. Mr. Isaac Hart stood by the window; a remarkably curly-brimmed hat perched sideways on his oily, raven ringlets; a large diamond ring garnished the little finger of a hand not conspicuous for cleanliness; the brilliant pink scarf round his throat was fastened through a large jewelled brooch in front—the *tout ensemble* indeed was not engaging. He turned round without taking off his hat, and with insolent familiarity greeted Lady Charlotte.

"Good morning, Lady Charlotte. Fine grounds, these of Potts'."

"I have no time to waste, Mr."—Lady Charlotte read the name on the card before throwing it into a waste-paper basket—

"Hart; please give me any message your employer may have intrusted to you."

"My employer, as you call him, gave me this little bill, which fell due the day before yesterday, and as your ladyship did not condescend to answer his little note, or to let 'my employer' know when you *was* a-going to pay him the monthly instalment as is due, why I've come on my employer's behalf to collect that sum."

"You may tell Mr. Levi that I am quite unable to pay at



present, he must wait if he ever hopes to receive payment in full. He can make me bankrupt if he likes, and then he will get nothing; but as the interest he charges is rather more usurious than even the worst of his tribe's, I don't suppose he will care to see the exact amount in print. I am sorry I cannot pay this month, but it will be more to Mr. Levi's interest to leave me in peace."

"Mr. Levi can judge for himself what is to his own interest, and he says he must have the money as is owing to him. So if your ladyship really don't want to waste time, you had better just hand over the money and take this here stamped acknowledgment."

Lady Charlotte had taken a seat near the table, and, as yesterday, had drawn the ornamental inlaid pistol-case towards her. She took out one of the weapons gingerly and carefully, as one unacquainted with the mysterious ways of firearms; she sat for a few moments with the pistol in her hand, the muzzle towards herself, and looked at it absently without speaking.

The Israelite soon showed signs of impatience.

"I think as you said you don't want to waste no time, Lady Charlotte. I don't neither. Are you going to give me that money?"

"No; it is not in my power to do so. You may tell Mr. Levi that when I can pay I will."

"But Mr. Levi told me to stay here until you did pay."

"Your staying here would do no good to Mr. Levi. If he will accept payment when convenient, all well and good; if not, the Bankruptcy Court is open to me. Your remaining here is an impertinence which will do Mr. Levi no good, and if I complain to Mr. Potts of your intrusion his servants will turn you out. You will be so good, therefore, as to leave the house at once."

"I don't leave the house without the money. Your ladyship must have lots of swell friends here who would lend you the money. Surely you know of some one who would settle this little business for you."

"I know of no one," said Lady Charlotte with a weary air. She looked at the pistol turned towards her breast. Perhaps it was loaded! Surely if it were it would be better just to raise it to her temples and with one little jerk end this miserable sordid struggle, this endless vexation about money, *money, money!* She hated the word. If only she had been rich in her own right! She had never been wicked or done anything really wrong, and yet life was rapidly becoming living torture, and all because of the miserable lack of money. Ah! what had she done that she should be made so miserable?

"I think your ladyship must know a friend who could help you in this little difficulty," the oily, nasal accents of the Israelite broke in upon Lady Charlotte's meditations. "I have heard it said that it's well bekknown who really is the boss of Reminshall



Abbey. Don't you think as Mr. Potts would settle this little matter? I have heard it said as there's more than friendship betwixt——"

There was something so revoltingly insolent in the man's look and manner, that his meaning flashed across Lady Charlotte's mind long ere the effect of his mere words could have done. Her face, which had been pale before, grew paler; she leapt out of her seat, pointed the revolver full at the man, and before she could fully realize the situation, she felt her hand violently jerked upwards, there was a flash, smoke, a report, and a dull thud as Mr. Isaac Hart fell to the ground.

Only for a moment did Lady Charlotte lose her presence of mind. The pistol dropped from her hand, she felt sick and giddy, but a gentle gust of summer air blowing in through the lace curtains revived her. She looked down at the man lying on the floor face upwards. "Good God! I have committed murder!" she cried, and rushed to the door and locked it. Then she knelt beside the man and fanned him with some papers from the table, but there was no sign of life. Looking round, she caught sight of some roses in a valuable crackle jar on the mantelshelf; she threw the roses out and poured some water over the forehead and behind the ears, as she remembered people had done to her when she fainted. Presently the man stirred ever so slightly and opened his eyes. "Thank Heaven!" she thought, "he is alive at least. If he dies I have committed murder, but there shall be as little *esclandre* as possible." Lady Charlotte unlocked the door and locked it again on the outside, and ran until she reached the hall. There she met a footman carrying a breakfast-tray.

"Where is your master?" she said, endeavouring to conceal her agitation, though she feared the loud beating of her heart must betray her.

"He is in his room, my lady."

"Then show me the way to his room at once. Put your tray down anywhere. I must go to him at once."

The footman stared at Lady Charlotte in speechless surprise.

"My master never sees any one except his secretary before he comes down to breakfast, my lady."

"Never mind, I must see him at once." Lady Charlotte could with difficulty preserve her composure. That man in the study might be dying while she was parleying with the footman. She took a slender gold bracelet from her wrist. "There, you may have that to give to your young woman; and now show me the way at once. I am in a great hurry."

The man put down his tray and bounded upstairs. Lady Charlotte ran after him. The footman stopped and pointed to a door hung with heavy folds of drapery.

"That is the sitting-room Mr. Potts uses, and his dressing-room opens out of it. He may be in either."

Lady Charlotte drew aside the curtain, knocked at the door, and, hardly waiting for an answer, went in.

"Heavy hogs lively, lard brisk and energetic in sympathy with hogs. Light hogs flexible and subject to reaction." Mr. Washington Potts was dictating a letter to his secretary when Lady Charlotte broke in.

"Dear Mr. Potts, I must speak to you alone for one moment. Please send this gentleman away."

"Stimpson, just you wait for me in my dressing-room for a few minutes. And now what can I do for your ladyship? I calculate you're the boss of me and this establishment, so just give me your orders."

At the word "boss" Lady Charlotte shuddered. That dreadful man downstairs, lying dead perhaps, had said the same thing. Decidedly she had been imprudent, and allowed misconceptions to arise. Once this business set to rights, she would drop this Yankee. People must not begin to talk about her.

Lady Charlotte explained the situation truthfully. She reflected that if the man downstairs should die, and she, an earl's daughter, were to be accused of murder, it would matter little who knew what she had done. There would be but one course open to her, and that the course she had shrunk from taking yesterday as a means of escape from worry.

Lady Charlotte wanted Mr. Potts to send for a doctor and to have the wounded man tended, and to keep the rest of the house in ignorance of the occurrence. She would play her part in the piece as though nothing had happened; no one would be able to guess from her appearance that anything unusual had taken place.

"And when the play is over I calculate you'll be wanting to make tracks?" said Mr. Potts coolly.

"On the contrary, if the injury should prove fatal, I will swear not to leave the house."

Mr. Potts sat silent and horrified, but only for a few moments. "I hook on," he said at last. "If the worst comes to the worst, I'll stand your friend. Stimpson shall help me carry the man here; we'll do it between us. I'll send a two-wheel cart for the doctor; everything shall be done for this man, and I guess that smart young woman as fixes you up had better turn nurse and do the nursing. That'll keep it private. You go to your room, and the less you appear to suspect a mystery, the better it will be for all jokers."

Even in her gratitude at the wealthy American's sympathy, Lady Charlotte shuddered at his vernacular. She went to her room and sat down, feeling sick with fear and horror. Had she committed a murder? How could she allow herself to be provoked to such an extent by a low-minded, money-lending Jew? What next misfortune *could* overwhelm her? She had lately considered herself specially marked by Destiny to be annoyed.

For a long time she sat in deep but distracted thought. She felt sometimes as though her brain would burst. A dozen times she got up and rushed to the door to do she knew not what. Once she opened the window wide and looked down at the marble terrace below. "It must be quite thirty feet," she thought, "and instant death, but how dreadful! No, I have not the courage for it that way."

A housemaid knocked at the door. "Oh, if you please, your ladyship, Mr. Potts says can I help you dress. Miss Howden, he says, is a-nursing Mr. Stimpson, as has been taken ill in master's room."

Lady Charlotte looked at her watch. "Quarter to twelve, and the play commences at three, and I suppose the people come about one. Yes, I suppose I had better dress now. That will be better than doing nothing and thinking and thinking until I must go mad."

Her toilette concluded, Lady Charlotte sat opposite her glass in doubt and hesitation. She looked at her reflection—a graceful figure in soft white silk—but a ghastly pallor, which seemed to be accentuated by those white draperies, frightened her. "I look as though I had committed a murder," she thought. "People would guess as much from my appearance." There was ever present to her mind a series of pictures, beginning with a trial for murder in which she would be designated by the council for the prosecution as the woman Craddock, and culminating in a gibbet and an audience of press-men at that final scene.

Lady Charlotte sat till nearly one, when a maid-servant brought her a note from the master of the house. It was in the secretary's handwriting, neither addressed nor signed.

"That is kind," thought Lady Charlotte bitterly; "Mr. Potts does not want to create incriminating evidence."

"The groom who went for the doctor did not find him at home, he had to drive on to Maidenhead to find another, so there has been delay in getting assistance. Mr. Hart has been conscious some time and has taken brandy which we poured down his throat. I will let you know in the course of the afternoon how matters progress. It will be better if you are seen everywhere in the grounds during the afternoon and evening. Your maid tells me that no one heard the report of the pistol except herself; the heavy *portières* must have deadened the sound."

With a little rouge Lady Charlotte concealed the deadly pallor, which she felt must otherwise attract universal attention. She asked the same maid-servant who had brought her the note to bring her some brandy, and, after swallowing what seemed to be an enormous quantity, she summoned up all her courage to leave her room and join the crowd downstairs.

Everything had been so well prepared beforehand that nothing was left to be arranged on the last day. A blazing July sun poured down on the grounds of Reminshall Abbey, and the little glen arranged for the performance was the only shady nook within the cultivated part of the grounds immediately surrounding the house.

Towards three the carriages belonging to that part of the audience who had paid for their seats began to arrive. Rich City men with their wives and daughters in ultra-fashionable bonnets and dresses, wives of doctors who had already reached that high footing on the medical ladder exemplified by residence in Harley Street, but not that proud eminence which means appearing in print amongst the favoured few who sign the daily bulletins of the illnesses of great ones; wives of barristers and many others who liked to see a dull play without the faintest spark of interest poorly performed by an absolutely inefficient though eminently aristocratic *corps dramatique*. These gathered in great force. They peered into everything; anxious to discover how the new millionaire did things. The daughters took mental notes of the housemaids' and ladies' maids' caps and aprons, and secretly resolved to confection caps and aprons identically the same for their own handmaidens for "Ma's next party." The men thought the ribbon-bordering poor and not equal to that in their own gardens at Norwood and Sydenham. The matrons, in the main, employed themselves in speculating as to how much the whole thing had cost to get up, and many came to the conclusion that the ices and refreshments alone, which were gratis, must have swamped the takings, so of course the charity must go to the wall. That really was of no consequence. Nobody even knew where the church was, or cared, except a few local magnates, and they were bidden to the feast and performance free of expense.

The exhumed pastoral Elizabethan drama in its new dress progressed rapidly. The amateur artistes had not acquired the art of lading out the sentences slowly as though they were loath to part with a line of their parts after the fashion of the modern psychological dramatic school; and, either from a nervous longing to get to the end and hide themselves, or from a desire to say it all before they forgot it, the piece played very rapidly.

Lady Charlotte got through her part not brilliantly, but no worse than the rest, though she felt that a lifetime's agony was compressed into the three hours occupied by the play and *entr'actes*. Towards the end of the last act, when she had grown accustomed to the appearance of the audience and had the hardihood to look it in the face and recognize individuals, her eyes suddenly fell upon the owner of Reminshall Abbey. He was sitting on a seat at the end of the front row, the end nearest the Abbey. The hero of the play was indulging in a long meandering soliloquy during which at rehearsals Lady Charlotte had been coached to occupy her-

self with elaborate stage business, but had forgotten all her coaching. She felt her eyes fixed on Mr. Potts. A servant in gorgeous livery, with much mysterious and apparently meaningless gold ornamentation dropping from one shoulder, came rapidly towards his master. The servant bent down with that remarkable air of blended mystery and respect peculiar to the well-mannered footman and murmured what seemed to Lady Charlotte a long communication.

Mr. Washington Potts looked serious and said a few words to the servant, and stood up and moved a few steps in the direction of the house.

Lady Charlotte felt her heart beating furiously. She thought she could divine what the message was. Mr. Potts was wanted in the house, the man was worse, dying perhaps, and the police had come to take his depositions.

For a few moments there was silence on the stage—that dreadful stage-wait of private theatricals when all the actors with the exception of the unconscious offender look the picture of silent misery. Lady Charlotte was the offender. She stood with her cheeks ghastly beneath the rouge, her eyes fixed upon Mr. Washington Potts and the servant.

"I knew it. He is *dead*—I have murdered him," she cried in a hoarse, awful voice, and fell prone on the stage.

The play, owing in the first place to its exceeding dullness and in the second to its very weak representation, had from the beginning been incomprehensible, so most of the audience applauded to the echo, under the impression that this was the first fine piece of acting in the play. The other actors, better informed, rushed forward and raised the still form, some ran and fetched iced water with which to bathe the temples.

Mr. Washington Potts jumped on to the stage, and helped one of the actors to carry Lady Charlotte to the house. Once on the sofa, being fanned by the attentive American, she soon revived and opened her eyes.

"Where am I?" she murmured. "Is it the prison?"

"No, Lady Charlotte, you are not in prison, nor you ain't going to be, after the message I sent you just before the piece began."

"What message? I got no message."

"Didn't that damned flunkey tell you? I'll give him an eye-opener when next I come across my gentleman. Well, I guess you've got the bulge of that Jew fellow, Lady Charlotte. Why, one of my fellows found a bullet in my saddle-bag arm-chair, and he brought it to me in a fright. Ah, says I, Lady Charlotte must have meant to polish him off, for she's let off two charges. However, I got the idea as I might as well look at the revolver; so I took it and let it off in a haystack for safety. Five good charges in it. Do you hook on? Well, in I ran, told Mr. Stimpson, and we set to pouring brandy down the Hebrew gentleman's throat.

He had swooned with fright, and when the doctor came he said as how he would suffer from the shock maybe for a few days, but he'd be all right after. Well, then I turned to and blackguarded him for coming here insulting my guests, and soon he let on all he knew about your dealings with Mr. Abraham Levi. Well, I've settled that account, and I've given Mr. Hart a cheque for fifty to get back his pluck with, and he's given me a stamped agreement never to trouble either you or me again."

It was some time before Lady Charlotte could fully realize the true state of affairs. For so many dreadful hours, that seemed like centuries, she had looked upon herself as the prisoner in the dock on trial for murder. Was her hair white? She had heard of hair turning white in a single night from terror. Surely the torture she had endured while acting in that dreadful play must have bleached her hair.

Lady Charlotte's hair had not lost its rich colour, nor her reason its sway. Urged by the Yankee to confess her motive for dealing with gentlemen of the Abraham Levi type, she admitted that she was on the verge of distraction and that her affairs were in a hopeless muddle, which meant that she owed thousands and hadn't a hundred clear in the world.

"I suppose you would think it sorter a drop in life to marry me, and have your debts cleared and paid off down to a farthing, and have an allowance of six hundred a year to dress on; always supposing as you will stake your honour not to run into debt again, or deal with Abraham Levis."

There was plenty of gossip for the first few weeks at Trouville; and for the very earliest of the grouse shooting the Washington Potts marriage filled every mouth that had any right to consider itself in or near society.

Lady Charlotte Craddock had married the great American pork dealer. The *trousseau* had been a nine days' wonder. Crump and Crushit ground their teeth when they heard of the afternoon tea offered by Messrs. Fitt and Squeeze, of Audley Street, to the chief of their customers, who were invited to view the *chef d'œuvres* of the *trousseau* of the season.

Mr. Washington Potts was only once heard to say, in strictest confidence, that of all his British purchases, *many* of which might have made a nigger's hair uncurl, he was bound to state that his British wife had niggest broke him, but that he was that set on her, he would have risked his bottom dollar to secure her.

Lady Charlotte Washington (the Potts very soon ceased to be part of her name) was never again heard to speak of the Yankee's vulgarity. She would, it is true, occasionally allude to her husband's quaint Americanisms. She possessed a little sheaf of stamped documents in her desk; they represented the price an American millionaire had paid to obtain a high-bred British wife, and the sum total of these documents could not be expressed in less than

five figures. She became the patroness of all 4th of July proceedings in London, and among her acquaintance on the other side of the Channel, was supposed to be mistress of the most sumptuously decorated mansion and the largest pin money of any other woman in the American's Paradise. Can earth show greater happiness?

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## OUR FRIENDS IN THE HUNTING FIELD.

By MRS. EDWARD KENNARD,

AUTHOR OF "THE GIRL IN THE BROWN HABIT," "KILLED IN THE OPEN,"  
"A CRACK COUNTY," ETC., ETC., ETC.

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### PART IV.

#### 1.—THE "FUNK-STICK."

OF all the people who come out hunting, no one is so sincerely to be pitied as the "Funk-stick." In every respect he is a most miserable man, full of abject fears of which he is horribly ashamed, yet which he cannot conquer or conceal by any effort. Constitutional timidity renders him a perfect martyr. Only the unfortunate wretch himself knows the agonies of mind which he endures—the doubts, the terrors, the dismal forebodings of imaginary danger, worse even than actual disaster. Why he hunts is a mystery; since, far from giving pleasure, the chase affords him nothing but pain. The only solution of the problem seems to be that years and custom have made him a complete slave to habit, and he has not sufficient moral courage to break away from the chains by which he is bound. Besides, he has no other resources, and hunting is a means of killing time. Yet what tortures the poor man undergoes. He wakes early in the morning with an oppressive feeling that something very unpleasant is going to happen during the day, and before his eyes are thoroughly open he remembers with a sinking spirit what that something is.

Hounds meet at the kennels, after not having been able to hunt for over a week on account of severe frost, which has now disappeared. He feels like a man who, having obtained a short reprieve, is suddenly informed that his last hour is come.

Good heavens! how abominably fresh the horses will be, after standing idle in their stable for so long. No amount of talking ever can persuade the factotum who presides over his equine department to give them enough work. It is useless trying to impress upon him that four hours' daily exercise is but just sufficient to keep an animal in good health. And now he will have to suffer from the vagaries of his steeds. The mere thought is terrifying.

He had decided over night to ride a recent purchase, a beautiful blood mare, but that was after dinner. In the morning he repents this determination, and feels that nothing shall induce him to get on her back until he knows a great deal more about her. She is certain to kick him off, or buck, or shy, or rear, or indulge in some equally alarming antic. He knows beforehand that his groom will receive the message contemptuously, but he cannot help it. For a time he struggles against his fears, but in the end he has to succumb to them, and sends out word to say that he has changed his mind, and will hunt Rochester, a confidential animal approaching his twentieth year, instead of Queen Bess.

The reply is that Rochester has been out exercising, and owing to the slippery state of the ground it would be unadvisable to hunt a horse whose forelegs are shaky and liable at any moment to give way altogether. The "Funk-stick" is quite aware of this fact, without hearing it repeated; but what is he to do? It is easier for him to buy a new hunter than to summon up courage to ride a fresh one, and of all his stud, Rochester is the animal he feels least afraid of. So Rochester, in spite of having been fed and watered, is saddled and our hero starts in fear and trembling. It is a gusty morning, and a cold north-east wind comes sweeping over the uplands. The old horse, not liking the sharp air after his warm stable, rounds his back a bit, going down the first hill from home.

Oh! what an agonizing pang shoots knife-like through the heart of his rider! That gentleman feels positively *ill* with apprehension, and from moment to moment anticipates some frightful calamity. He is far too uneasy to enter into conversation with any of the numerous acquaintances who overtake him. If the truth were known he is downright afraid to let his animal break into a canter. The awful shadow of "what might happen" weighs upon his spirit like a ton of lead. He cannot shake off its depressing influence. His nerves quiver, his teeth chatter, but not from the cold alone. Other causes tend to produce this result, though his pallid cheek flushes red with shame as he puts a name to them. He is too anxious to be able to talk, and the only remark he can jerk out to his friends as they pass by is:

"Awfully bad going to-day. The ground is in a most dangerous condition."

"Nonsense, my good fellow!" they laugh back in reply; "you'll soon forget all about it when hounds run. It's more slippery on the roads than anywhere else. Come, hurry up or you'll be late."

He shakes his head and gives a melancholy smile. If anything were to prevent his hunting that day he knows he should not be sorry. It's all very well for other people to "hurry up," but how can he? Were he to do so, Rochester might whisk his tail, cock his ears, or misdeemean himself generally. Such danger is too great to be

lightly incurred. By immense caution he hopes to be able to avert it.

His troublesome heart goes thump, thump against his ribs, when at length he is forced to quit the safe and friendly road and strike across a line of bridle-gates and fields. The latter are dotted with horsemen and women on their way out to covert, and at sight of them and of the fresh green pastures, Rochester distends his nostrils, snorts, and oh, dear! oh, dear! proceeds to give a little playful bound into the air. Our hero immediately commences hauling frantically at his head, and in an agonized voice cries out with stentorian lungs: "Quiet, horse! oh, do, do be quiet!"

Every one explodes with laughter, and even Rochester seems to feel a contempt for his rider, for unheeding this beseeching appeal, he snatches at the bit, breaks into a canter, and out of pure light-heartedness, gives another flourish of his heels.

Tears start to the wretched "Funk-stick's" eyes; he is so desperately frightened. His first instinct is to dismount and walk home, but people surround him on all sides. Surreptitiously he manages to wipe away the signs of his weakness and blows his nose with great energy and determination. Arrived at the meet, things do not improve. Neither does his courage, which by this time has reached a very low ebb. That old brute Rochester refuses to stand still for a second. He sidles about, paws the ground and edges up to the hounds in a most alarming and disagreeable fashion. In fact, he keeps his unhappy rider in a constant state of trepidation. The "What might happen," is rapidly being magnified into the "What will and must happen."

By this time the poor "Funk-stick" is so nervous that he is reduced to a state of almost absolute silence. He has no longer any spirit or inclination to converse, and is not a good enough actor to dissemble how much he suffers. His craven fear renders him more or less callous of appearances. It dominates his whole nature and crushes every other emotion by its overwhelming strength.

He cruelly disappoints those ladies of his acquaintance who do not know him intimately. Meeting him in a country house or at a dinner party, they may have voted him a cheery, pleasant fellow; for off a horse he is a completely different man. Out hunting, they ask themselves what on earth has come to him? He seems to avoid their society, has not a word to say for himself and only just escapes being downright rude. How could they ever have fancied he was nice, and capable of being converted into a husband?

Poor "Funk-stick!" If only they could look down into the depths of his shifting quicksand of a heart—a thing as lightly ruffled as a blade of grass by every passing wind—and were aware of the torturing fears disturbing it, no doubt their compassion

would be aroused and they would pity rather than blame its unhappy owner.

Unhappy truly, for he is the possessor of a peculiarly sensitive nature and despises his own cowardice, even whilst he succumbs to it. The efforts he makes to conceal this terrible infirmity are as pathetic as they are futile. He will talk ever so bravely when an absolutely unjumpable country lies before him, and he knows that the whole Field will be forced to fall back on a line of gates. He rides up then in a tremendous hurry and pushes through with the first half-dozen, looking complacently round when a check occurs, as much as to say, "Ha, ha! who is up?" He does his very best to make a show of gallantry when he is perfectly certain that no calls will be made upon his courage.

If he gets hold of a sympathetic listener, he will tell him quite gravely that he is only prevented from jumping owing to having sprained a muscle in his thigh, which causes exquisite agony; or that he has knocked his knee very badly against a gate-post and injured the cartilage; or run a thorn into his great toe, or a variety of different excuses. He is seldom at a loss to explain how he would if he could, but doesn't because he mayn't. He tries hard to keep up a semblance of valour, but only complete strangers are deceived by his statements.

His form is known to a nicety, and if the truth must be told, many of his comrades in the hunting field look upon him with profound contempt. To see him turn away from a fence when half-a-dozen women and children have been over it, is certainly not calculated to inspire much respect for his manliness or courage. He is, indeed, a real object of pity.

Unluckily the "Funk-stick" possesses a considerable influence.

There are always a large number of people who fluctuate between the borderland of bravery and cowardice, and to whom example is extremely contagious. Their attitude is determined by their environments, and, like sheep, they follow the leader.

Now, when our friend "Funk-stick" enters a field, and not seeing an easy egress, at once begins calling out, "Don't go there; don't go there. I know that place of old, and it's a most horrible one to jump," a very numerous contingent scuttle off in his footsteps, not even waiting to see if he speaks the truth. Their anxiety has been aroused, and they prefer to avoid the danger rather than face it. In truth, it is a comical sight to see the whole of the "Funk-stick" division stopped by some little, insignificant gap, and to witness the cautious way in which, after many peeps and much hesitation, the bravest member will proceed to dismount, clear all the thorns away, then walk over on foot, dragging his horse behind him, to an accompanying chorus of "Bravas! Bravas!" He has shown them the thing can be done, and some even pluck up sufficient spirit to follow his example on horseback.

Time seems of no importance to this gallant brigade when they come to a fence. They plant themselves before it, with a species of dogged patience, and would wait all day rather than have to jump it. They bore, and creep, and crawl and scramble; but they have a rooted objection to a *bonâ fide* leap. Very few venture on so desperate a deed.

But if they lose precious moments at their fences, the rush they make for a road is something truly magnificent. An avalanche let loose is a joke to them, and our "Funk-stick," suddenly turned brave, heads the cavalcade. Nevertheless, he derives little enjoyment from these wild gallops over the macadam. His conscience accuses him all the while, and scoffs at his timidity. It leaves him no peace, for craven fear, such as his, brings its own punishment.

As a matter of fact, the pains he endures are something inconceivable, whilst the efforts he makes, the resolutions he forms to master his nervousness are quite pitiable; for they never lead to any improvement. The truth is, he can't help himself: it all comes to that.

He has been born with a shrinking, easily-frightened nature, and it cleaves to him even in manhood. How gladly would he change it if he could; but he can't. The mysterious laws which govern the universe are too strong for him. His mother may have received a shock before his birth, his nurse may have frightened him in early childhood by stories of ghosts and supernatural beings. There are always a hundred outside causes to account for the result. Timorous the "Funk-stick" was brought into the world, and timorous he will go out of it, dreading death even more than he dreads a big fence, and yielding up his feeble life in an agony of apprehension.

Poor man! poor "Funk-stick!"

Is it generous, or even fair, to despise him as much as we only too often do?

He, like the rest of us, is but a creature of chance, of circumstance and above all of evolution. How can it affect his stronger-nerved brethren if he prefers gates to hedges, roads to fields? Surely every one may hunt in the manner that pleases him or her best, without being abused and turned into thinly-disguised ridicule.

No doubt, a man worthy of the name should possess his fair share of courage; but if he hasn't got it—and many haven't—is it his fault?

No, certainly not. He did not elect to be born a coward of his own free-will, but had no choice in the matter. As a rule, the "Funk-stick" will escape unkind criticism if he has but the good sense to hold his tongue and makes no attempt to magnify his own indifferent performances. If he is humble, and does not pretend to any mock heroism, then the majority of his

fellow-sportsmen will let him off easily enough. They are seldom venomous unless roused by petty trickery and imposture.

But if he is not only a "Funk-stick," but an impudent braggart into the bargain, then woe be to him. He will meet with merciless scorn, scathing ridicule, and infinite contempt. Even the fair sex will turn against him, for if there is one thing that British men and women hate more than another, that thing is humbug.

It is fatal to make out you ride well when you don't, to boast when you have absolutely nothing to boast about, and to glorify yourself into a lion when you are only a very, very weakly little mouse.

## 2.—THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

WE cannot help admiring the man who goes first, in spite of his courage being sometimes dashed with a touch of brutality; but the Good Samaritan commands a still higher regard. Our hearts swell with love and gratitude whenever we think of him, and of his numerous acts of self-sacrifice. How often has he not helped us out of an emergency, or come to the rescue when we are in serious difficulties? He is literally brimming over with the milk of human kindness, and there is nothing on earth that he will not do to assist a fellow-creature.

Other men go wild about sport, and when hounds are running hard become so infected by the enthusiasm of the passing hour as to appear dead to all external sentiments; but he would let hounds, fox, huntsman go to the dogs rather than lose an opportunity of helping suffering humanity. If we fall at a fence, it is invariably the Good Samaritan who picks us up. If our horse gallops wildly off, he pursues him for miles, and never rests until he brings him back to his owner; and if the unlucky steed tumbles into a deep ditch, and cannot be extricated except by rope and spade, he cheerfully gives up his day's pleasuring and sticks to you like a man and a Briton. He trots off to find labourers, sets everybody to work, gives the right instructions in the midst of a Babel of tongues, and of contrary opinions, and will not hear of leaving you until everything is well, and the animal saved from his perilous position. If he fancies you are hurt, he will ride all the way home with, and take almost as much care of you as a mother does of a child. In more serious cases, he gallops on ahead to fetch the doctor, and has everything prepared before your arrival. He is the kindest, the best, and most unselfish fellow in the world, and never seems to think of himself; all his thoughts and energies are concentrated on aiding other people.

Does he meet with gratitude? Alas! not much. Who does in this world? He deserves immense credit, and, comparatively speaking, gets very little.

The fact is his many good actions are performed so quietly and

unostentatiously, he regards them so entirely as a matter of course, that after a while folks adopt the same opinion. They see no reason whatever why he should not be allowed to open gates for the whole field, and let everybody pass through, if it pleases him. Of course, he wouldn't do so if he didn't like it; they would not, and they judge him by themselves—a very common way of jumping at conclusions. On the same principle, if he chooses to dismount at every awkward fence that proves a "stopper" and tear away the binders until an easy passage is made, there can be no possible reason why they should not take advantage of his good-nature without necessarily being obliged to wait and help him to re-mount. *They* did not ask him to get down; he did it of his own accord.

All the same, very few people go out hunting who, either directly or indirectly, do not profit by the presence of the Good Samaritan. He is the least aggressive or intrusive of men, yet whenever a little timely assistance is required he seems, as it were, to drop from the clouds.

The ladies regard him with peculiar tenderness, and he inspires quite a fraternal sentiment amongst their ranks. He is not a person to flirt with, but he is a person always to apply to in case of need. His staidness and solidity give a wonderful sense of protection. They feel safe and well cared for when riding about with him.

They know that if their girths want tightening, or their stirrup shortening, and they appeal to their husbands and brothers, grumpy words are likely to be the result. It is no light matter to ask most men to help a female in distress. She feels the aid is given grudgingly, and a black mark, so to speak, is scored up against her in the future, as a bother and a nuisance.

But the Good Samaritan has no black marks. He never thinks that he is wasting his time, losing his place, or falling to the rear, when it is within his power to administer to the wants of others. Such reflections do not cross his mind. He is only too happy to be of use, and gives his services in a generous, ungrudging and uncalculating spirit.

With the farmers he is most popular, and justly so, for they have a rare friend in him. He is always the first to cry out "Ware wheat," and to check the too impetuous ardour of the field, when galloping helter-skelter over some poor man's growing crops. He shows his forethought and consideration in a hundred different ways, and always has the agriculturist's interest at heart. Would that his example were more frequently followed by those who profess to be good sportsmen, but who think of nothing save their own personal amusement, and whose sole idea is to out-do their companions.

If some rough, young colt escapes from the hovel in which it has taken shelter, our Good Samaritan, heedless that the chase is



sweeping on, will at once ride after it, and drive it back again; or he will stand, cracking his whip, in order to prevent a flock of sheep from getting through a gateway, quite unmoved by the sight of all his comrades hastening ahead with feverish speed.

When the lambing season comes round, it is no uncommon thing for him to dismount from his horse, pick up some poor, frightened little wanderer in his arms, and restore it to the bleating and anxious mother, who dares not approach within a certain distance of those terrifying hounds.

If any stranger comes out hunting, having forgotten his sandwich case and flask, our friend immediately offers him the contents of his own, and insists on his going shares, even if he does not empty them entirely.

"But, my dear sir, I am depriving you," remonstrates the stranger feebly.

"Pooh, pooh, what does that matter?" comes the generous answer. "Never mind about me."

The virtues of the Good Samaritan are more than ever conspicuous at a fence. It is impossible to abstain from recognizing them. When others are bustling, shoving, swearing, he remains perfectly calm, is never in a hurry, consequently never jealous nor unfair like a large proportion of hunting people. If he sees any one battling with a fractious steed, even although he be but a rough rider in everybody's way, he will always yield his place with a benevolent courtesy, admirable in its total self-abnegation. And even when folks who have not the excuse of an unmanageable horse take mean advantage of his good nature, as they frequently do, the only reproof they elicit is a "Go on, go on, I can wait, and apparently you can't."

He rides his animals with care, and as one who loves them. He could no more bully and abuse them, as some men do, than fly. Indeed, few things excite his anger more than to see a poor brute hit fiercely over the head, or jobbed viciously in the mouth, simply because, with the best will in the world, it may happen to have made some slight mistake over a fence. His honest face grows red with indignation at the sight, and although not given to judging his neighbours severely, he turns away, feeling an instinctive dislike for the rider, in whom his swift perceptions tell him some manly element is wanting.

When any casualty occurs the Good Samaritan is always to the fore, irrespective of class or persons. A groom, riding a wild young horse, tears through a blind ditch, and rolls head-over-heels, breaking three ribs in his fall. The man lies motionless on the ground, his limbs doubled up in a horrible, tortuous manner, and looks like one from whom the life has departed. The foremost horsemen draw rein, glance at him commiseratingly, and exclaim, "Ah, poor fellow! He's Mr. So-and-so's groom." Then ride off, as if fearful of being detained. Of course if they were wanted

they would stop ; but no doubt there are plenty of people to look after him, and, moreover, hounds have just picked up the line, and appear as if they were settling to their work in earnest.

Such reasoning as this does not hold good with our kind-hearted Samaritan. To him a man with three broken ribs is a man, whether he be a poor groom or a rich duke. In truth, he would rather help the former, for if his grace were to fall only too many friends would immediately rush to his assistance, whereas plain John Smith is passed by a score of cavaliers who all leave it to some one else to pick him up.

So our friend dismounts from his horse, raises the fallen man's shoulders, rests them against his knee, gives the sufferer a drop of brandy out of his flask, and, aided by three stout kindly farmers, proceeds to carry him on a hurdle to the nearest cottage, where they tenderly deposit their semi-conscious burden on an old horse-hair couch. This done, he rides off in search of a medical man, and makes arrangements about procuring a trap. He thinks nothing whatever of giving up his day's sport, and all his energies are absorbed in trying to ease the wounded man, and, if possible, to save him pain. And though John Smith is only a groom occupying a humble sphere in life, he has a heart, and is much more touched by and grateful for kindness than many a fine gentleman, who looks upon it as his right and his due, and forgets the services rendered directly he regains his health.

But the Good Samaritan never expects thanks. They make him feel shy and uncomfortable, for to do good comes naturally to him. It is a heaven-born instinct, and in gratifying it he only follows the promptings of his nature. He possesses a fine-fibred and chivalrous disposition, which renders him a veritable King Arthur of the hunting field. He has not a mean or ignoble thought. His great tender heart is easily moved to pity, and suffering in any form never fails to appeal to it. All his strength he places at the service of the weak, deeming it a strong man's part to protect women and children, youths and dumb animals, instead of profiting by their feebleness to display his superior might.

What matters it if the kindness of his spirit prevents him from riding very hard, or if he is giving up places when he ought to be stealing them, making way instead of pushing forward, quietly effacing himself in lieu of struggling with his neighbours at a gateway?

Others may jump fences that he has not even seen. They may have been with hounds, occupying a glorious position in the van, whilst he was plodding away in the rear picking up cripples. They have the honour of seeing the fox dismembered, and he is trotting about, shutting farmers' gates and otherwise attending to their property.

What of that ?

Whether he be first or last, he is the finest gentleman in the whole of the hunting field, and those who laugh at him are not worthy to tie his shoe-strings.

He is better than ourselves, less selfish, more charitable and gracious, so naturally we find it a little hard to praise his superior qualities.

Nevertheless, after our own unworthy fashion, we are grateful for the kindnesses received at his hands. In times of misfortune, such as overtake us all, the hunting field would seem but a very sorry place without the Good Samaritan.

When the hard riders pass us by with a careless "Not hurt, are you?" he flies to the rescue. When our both companions look another way, for fear we may expect them to stop, he comes galloping up, his kind face working with solicitude.

Oh, Good Samaritan! Oh, dear big-hearted fellow, let us give you your due, and reverence you as a being made of infinitely finer materials than the great commonplace majority of the human race.

### 3.—THE HOSPITABLE MAN.

THE hospitable man is always a popular one, since nothing appeals so surely to people's favour as plying them with plenty to eat and to drink. This he understands thoroughly, and is profuse in his invitations, showering them with great impartiality on the numerous acquaintances, masculine and feminine, he makes in the hunting field.

He himself is a regular *bon viveur*, with a keen appreciation of all good things appertaining to the culinary art. True, the increasing rotundity of his waistcoat, whose line of beauty grows yearly more and more curved, now and again affords subject for serious reflection; but he has a happy knack of evading disagreeable thought, and putting it off to another day. He thoroughly enjoys the various delicacies which he forces upon his guests, and sets a highly contagious example by the hearty manner in which he attacks the dishes, as much as to say, "These things are not meant to look at, but to eat. Therefore, fire away, and don't stand on ceremony."

His great delight is when the hounds meet at his house. This is always the signal for a feast; and directly the fixture is publicly announced, he goes among his friends, as happy as an old hen cackling over her eggs, and says to each one in a mysterious and confidential whisper, full of pride and self-importance, "Look here, my dear fellow, what do you think? The hounds are at my place next Saturday. Now mind and come early. You will see how much respected I am by the aristocracy. Get up half-an-hour sooner than usual; you won't regret it. Do you know what I am going to do now the thing is settled? I am going to run up to

town on Thursday; yes, actually give up a day's hunting, on purpose to buy a piece of good Scotch beef at my friend Mr. Cocks', in Jermyn Street. The meat you get here is not eatable. It's so infernally tough."

"But what a lot of trouble," suggests his companion, who would not forego a day's hunting for all the beef in the world. "It hardly seems worth it."

"Ah! don't speak to me of the trouble, as long as the things are good. Do you think I would ask my friends inside my house and give them bad meat? No, certainly not. I should be ashamed of myself. I pay a shilling a pound to Mr. Cocks for my beef. A shilling a pound is a great deal, but then it's of very different quality from what you can buy here; it positively melts in your mouth." And the old fellow smacks his lips in anticipation. Then he sidles up to his listener, gives him a friendly nudge, and, with a knowing wink, adds, "Now mind you come early, for there'll be a bottle or two of my famous port out on Saturday. That's the sort of jumping-powder to put heart into a man. After half-a-dozen glasses, I'd ride at the biggest fence ever planted in this county."

Thus the kind, garrulous fellow runs on, and will take no denial. His feelings are terribly hurt if any one attempts to make an excuse, and nearly all his acquaintances are entrapped beforehand into promising that they will enter his hospitable doors on the morning of the meet.

When the important day arrives—for he looks upon hounds meeting at his house as one of the greatest events of the year—from an early hour he is in a state of fuss and bustle, going down into the cellar with his butler, and reverently bringing up one dirt-encrusted bottle after another, paying repeated visits to the kitchen, and personally superintending every arrangement for the forthcoming festivity. By half-past ten o'clock all is ready, and with a species of proud rapture he looks at the long dining-table, enlarged to its full size, and literally laden with delicacies.

At one end a huge round of the celebrated Scotch beef, so familiar by repute to the whole Hunt, occupies a prominent position, and looks sufficient to feed a regiment of hungry soldiers. At the other, an enormous cold roast turkey, bursting with stuffing and garnished with sausages, ornaments the board. The side dishes consist of chicken, ham, tongue, sandwiches, mutton pies, biscuits, plum cake, ginger-bread nuts, &c., &c. Bottles of wine, soda and seltzer water are freely dotted about in between. The only pity is that people have come to hunt, and not to eat. This thought flashes regretfully across the provider's brain.

Meantime folks begin to arrive, and the master of the house, his jolly, rubicund face beaming with hospitality, stands at the front door, and invites, entreats and implores every fresh-comer to enter and partake of the good cheer within. Nothing vexes

him more than if they refuse, asserting that they are not hungry.

"God bless my soul!" he bursts forth. "If you can't eat, you can drink, surely. Take my word for it, I'll not poison you. Everybody in the county can tell you what sort of stuff my old port is."

"Thank you, thank you, my good friend, but I never indulge at this hour of the morning."

The hospitable man looks after the abstainer in disgust as he rides away, and behind his grizzled moustache murmurs indignantly, "D——d fool."

He meets with several vexations. Amongst others, it grieves him deeply to see how little the Scotch beef and similar substantial dainties are appreciated.

"Dear me! dear me!" he exclaims in tones of real concern. "What's the matter with you fellows? There the things are, and why the devil can't you eat them? Do you suppose they are only to be looked at?"

It is useless for the guests to try and explain that they have but very recently swallowed an excellent breakfast, and are totally unable to get up another appetite so soon. The old fellow presses, urges and insists, and all with such genuine kindness, that finally they yield to the force of circumstances, and allow an enormous helping of underdone meat to be heaped upon their plate. To please their host they take a mouthful or two, are informed that they are eating Mr. Cocks' prime Scotch beef at a shilling a pound, and with a sigh of resignation gulp it down by the aid of a glass of sherry or cherry brandy, then beat a hasty retreat into the open air.

The entertainer, thanks to the excellence of his own port, has by this time become exceedingly cheery and loquacious. With infinite reluctance, he allows one relay of friends to depart, then goes out into the garden in search of another batch, who, whether they like it or not, are stuffed with eatables and drinkables, similarly to their predecessors. The gentlemen don't come very much to the front on these occasions. The hospitable man pityingly sums them up as "poor feeders;" but amongst the farmers he finds many a kindred spirit. Fresh from a long jog to covert, and maybe an early ride round their farm in addition, several of them play an excellent knife and fork, and attack the Scotch beef with a will. This cheers the cockles of their host's expansive heart, and he watches them eat with unfeigned pleasure. He feels at last that he is not throwing his pearls before swine, but offering them to people capable of appreciating their good points.

"Capital piece of beef that, eh, Brown?" he says, smiling benignly.

"Furst rate, sir," is the reply. "I never tasted a better. It's a pleasure to put a tooth into it."

"Aha! Brown, you're a man who knows what's what, and can do justice to a good bit of meat when it's set before him."

"I hope so, sir. I should be very ungrateful if I couldn't. But this is regular prime; tender, juicy, and fine-fibred. We don't get meat like that in these parts."

"You're right there. I bought it in London, of my friend Mr Cocks in Jermyn Street."

Whereupon, for about the twentieth time, he repeats the story of how, whenever hounds meet at his house, he makes a point of running up to town and paying Mr. Cocks' establishment a visit.

"I never mind the expense," he concludes, with honest pride. "I never let that stand in the way on occasions like the present. I like to give my friends the best of everything, and then if they aren't satisfied, why it ain't my fault, eh?"

Messrs. Brown and Co. make a hearty meal, not forgetting to do full justice to the liquor. They linger round the well-spread board until hounds are on the point of throwing off, when at length they reluctantly tear themselves away. The hospitable man then proceeds to mount, though he experiences some little difficulty in introducing the point of his toe into the stirrup. It is by no means easy to stand still on one leg, and a curious haze, no doubt owing to the transition from a warm room to the cold atmosphere, obscures his eyesight. But these are only trifles, scarce worth mentioning, except very incidentally. He is in excellent spirits, and feels full of valour. He moves among the crowd with a sense of richly-deserved self-satisfaction, conscious that they have been royally entertained, and can find nothing to complain of. His reputation for hospitality, for Scotch beef and old wine has been fully sustained. Strangers have seen how richly it is deserved, and witnessed the generous principles on which his establishment is conducted. His worst enemy could not accuse him of being niggardly or mean. This knowledge makes his heart swell with triumph.

The very foot people have been treated to bread, cheese and beer *ad libitum*. When they touch their hats respectfully, he cannot help feeling that the compliment is merited. How is it possible to prevent a man from being aware of his own amiable qualities, and considering them entitled to recognition?

Every now and again the good old fellow asks his friends to dinner. On these gala nights it behoves them to be very careful, for he plies them with so much vintage wine, such marvellous selections of brown sherry, delicate claret and enticing port, that they are only too apt to suffer from the effects next morning, and rise from their couch with a splitting headache. As for their host, he is seemingly injured, for he eats, drinks, and mixes his liquors in a fashion which puts the younger generation to shame. They can't compete with him. At such times he grows very jovial and racy in his conversation. Peals of laughter issue



from the dining-room. His after-dinner stories have the reputation of being surprisingly witty and excessively naughty, and are greeted with salvos of applause. All the young fellows eagerly accept an invitation from him to dine and sleep the night. They are sure of an amusing evening, free from all stiffness and ceremony, and the hospitable man has a peculiarly gracious manner, which makes everybody feel at home in his presence. He prefers to entertain, rather than be entertained, disliking long cold drives of many miles along country roads, and not caring to quit his own snug rooms and warm fireside.

In the hunting field he is a cheery, gregarious old soul, ever ready for a laugh, though if the truth must be told, he is fonder of one at somebody else's expense than at his own. He likes to hear the latest gossip, and takes an intense interest in the doings and sayings of his neighbours. His cook and his cellar are never-failing sources of conversation. They play an important part in his life, for as he shrewdly observes, "Horses disappoint, friends annoy, but a good meal and a good bottle of wine are things that a man can always fall back upon with satisfaction."

It is impossible to help liking him; he is such a kind, generous, sociable creature. He does not bother his head about politics or the Eastern Question, and cares nothing for the encroachments of science on religion, the evils of over-population, or any of the moving topics of the day. They occasion no disturbance in his equable and well-balanced mind, and he studies the *menu* of a morning with far more interest than he does the newspaper.

He has, however, one very pressing trouble. From time to time certain twinges of gout remind him that all flesh is mortal. His doctor recommends a simpler diet and total abstention from alcoholic drinks. The consequence is they have had a desperate quarrel.

"Darned idiot!" he growls to some bosom friend, of whose sympathy he feels certain beforehand. "Just as if life would be worth living without a good sound bottle of wine a day. That doctor of mine is of no use; I shall leave him. He takes my guineas, does me no good, and talks nonsense into the bargain. What confidence can one place in a fellow like that? The man's a fool, and what's more, he don't understand my constitution a bit. When a person has got gout his system wants building up; it's the greatest mistake in the world to lower it. Gout comes almost entirely from poverty of blood."

Few things vex the hospitable man more than, after an absence from home, to hear on his return that the hounds have run near his place.

"What!" he exclaims, "you killed in my field—the field below my house—and nobody went in! How's that? I must make inquiries. Are people to be starved because I happen to be away? It makes me mad to think of it. I feel positively ashamed. My



servants—they have orders to ask everybody in. Why was it not done? People will say I am stingy—that I only entertain when I am there myself,” and so on, and on.

It is real hard work to pacify him and to make him believe that no one for an instant doubted his hospitality, especially after the many conspicuous proofs which he has given of it.

“Ah,” he says with a sigh, “the thing is done, and it’s no use talking, but I shall take good care it don’t happen again. Those lazy fellows of mine ought to have brought out trays with the wine directly they heard the hounds. It did not matter how far they had to go.”

Our friend is exceedingly partial to the fair sex, and they look upon him with great favour in return. His hearty, kindly manner sets them at their ease, and many a sip out of his flask do they enjoy on a cold, frosty morning. It delights him to see them smack their rosy lips and cry with a pretty air of affectation, “Oh, how strong! You bad, bad man! How can you possibly drink such intoxicating stuff?”

He gives a knowing wink in return and says gravely, “My dear, you are quite right. I can’t take much, any more than you can, but what little I have I like good.”

So he goes through life; hunting, eating and drinking, without any enemies, and with a vast number of friends; some like him for himself, others for what they can get out of him, for, alas, disinterested affection is rare here below.

And when, one fine day, he succumbs to a fit of apoplexy, brought on by too full a habit of body, he is missed by the whole Hunt, who exclaim, “Ah, poor old chap, he wasn’t half a bad sort in his way!”

Comrades of the hunting field, if you and I meet with any higher praise than this when our turn comes to jump our last fence, and feel the spring of a good horse under us for the last time, we may consider ourselves lucky. “Not a bad sort in his way” is high eulogy from the survivors, who are seldom given to enthusiasm.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE STUDY OF HANDWRITING.

By HENRY FRITH.

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"**H**ANDWRITING lets out secrets," says the Rev. Mr. Spooner in his article on "Handwriting and Character," in a late number of *Murray's Magazine*, but he adds, "How are we to judge?" It will be my care to initiate the reader into some of the secrets of the graphologist in this paper, which, I think, will convince the critic whom I have quoted that there is a good deal more in handwriting than appears to the average observer. Many of Mr. Spooner's criticisms are excellent, and his essay, although apparently a little contradictory, is well argued. It is in no spirit of rivalry, but with the view of supplementing his paper, that I am induced to give the graphologist's ideas upon "Handwriting and Character" in reply to the former essay.

In the first place it should be borne in mind that the actual style of writing—I mean writing what is usually termed a "good" hand—has comparatively little bearing on character. A man may be as honest as the day, and write a "bad" hand. Another may be deceitful and diplomatic, and yet write boldly, frankly, and we say what a good hand So-and-So writes. All the graphologist has to do is to study the forms of the letters, the upward, the even, or the downward direction of the lines, the firmness of the crossings of the "t's," and he will tell you whether the writer is really good or not, or whether his bad writing is the result of bodily infirmity, age, or the naturally rapid, often almost unintelligible, scrawl of imaginative genius—the result of the brain hurrying off at a score, and the tired hand's endeavours to keep pace with it.

Again, the graphologist can only undertake to deduce true character from the *natural* unaffected writing of the subject; and it is a curious trait in most characters that the signature is almost invariably natural, although the writer may have endeavoured in some measure to disguise his "fist." But any one may disguise his handwriting; indeed, Lord Chesterfield declared that "any man who has the use of his eyes and his right arm can write any hand he pleases." Is it not a pity some do not please to write more intelligibly! Still, such handwriting is not true, but the character of the writer would be discovered after minute investigation; unless he was a practised dissimulator his letters would betray him in a short time.

As regards the change in handwriting in age, or when weakness of constitution, even temporarily, sets in, we have also something to say. The change which often comes with age is due to change of character in the individual, or to cases in which use is second nature, and, therefore, the writing is a natural outcome of character and disposition. Failing eyesight will often change a hand as a whole, but the forms of the letters will tell us whether the disposition is altered; or very possibly the consciousness of his bodily infirmity will make a man more careful and prudent in his general "walk and conversation." He may be unconscious of the change in him while he is writing, but circumspection and the necessity for carefulness are impressed upon his hitherto off-hand and impulsive brain. His hand alters, not because his eye-sight fails (for he can, and does, wear glasses), but because his *mind* is impressed by his weakness, and his nerves are answering to the brain.

Once more as regards clerks. Mr. Spooner, whom I have already quoted, says, "We know how meaningless individual clerks' hands tend to become." The writing of some "has become by constant use an almost purely mechanical process."\* These statements are capable of emendation. Let me in the first place state my belief that clerks' hands are not by any means "meaningless," that is, *characterless*, which is Mr. Spooner's contention. The average clerk writes a clear, open hand, neat and orderly in appearance. Why? Because he is not greatly imaginative; he is doing routine work for which nature has moulded him, and because his character is plodding, steady, honest, and not imaginative, his writing is steady, clear; well-formed letters, lines straight, all typical traits of a reliable clerk. He is a clerk because he has these characteristics—he has not these characteristics of writing *because he is a clerk!* Precision and neatness are his natural attributes; his writing shows him to be trustworthy, open, candid, honest, painstaking, neat and tidy. He is all these, and more, or he would not have been retained in his position. How can such handwriting be characterized as "meaningless!"

Besides, all clerks do not write such careful hands, such "copperplate." Take a youthful energetic correspondent, or a stockbroker's quick, clever, smart clerk, a man of ideas and intuition. Will he write a plodding hand? Certainly not. His writing will be flowing, with high-barred *t's*, and the letters will be uneven in height, showing tact and a flowing imagination, a quick brain. Compare the man who runs in a groove and the man who uses his brain a little outside his groove. They are both clerks, but they indicate their tendencies clearly in their writing. There are no doubt exceptions in which men have been obliged to do distasteful duties, and by will and application have conquered

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NOTE.—Mark "mechanical;" no spontaneity in it—no will, no brain!

their dislike to plodding; but their writing will break out when they are not in the office and not writing by "rule and line." Even in the ledgers you will see the tendency to hurry on.

Therefore, I maintain that hands are not "meaningless." They all have a meaning and character in them, and characteristics suited to the owners. The business hand may not display any marked eccentricity, or any great talent for painting or other form of art, but it will indicate punctuality, order, *finesse*, firmness, some selfishness most likely, with economy. I have such a handwriting by me now as I write, and though the individual is not a regular business man in trade, he is an excellent man of business if report be true. I have had no means of judging of him in such a capacity save from his handwriting.

As regards the handwriting of boys at school, we read: "In no particular is man more imitative than in this matter of handwriting. A vast majority of people in 'forming' their hands, more or less deliberately copy the writing of some one else—parent or teacher, friend or acquaintance." Then the critic says that a certain type of writing "has run over a considerable number of years through the great proportion of the upper boys in one of our public schools, a stamp of handwriting clearly due to the influence of one particular master."

Now, here, to my mind, Mr. Spooner is arguing against himself. He does not say that *all* the boys write alike, but only a certain proportion of them, and the writing is due to the "*influence of the master*." Precisely! The master's brain has overpowered the youthful brains of his pupils; his ideas are their ideas for the time being, and as he exerts his "influence" he causes them to imitate him. All, save some independent and original *senior brains*, do as his stronger brain bids them! They write as he does, *at school*. But after? When released from his influence, and when they have become lawyers, doctors, soldiers and sailors, do they write his hand? No, *certainly not*; unless their tastes are still in harmony with his in after life. Do two people *ever* write exactly alike? No! The schoolboys *may* write *like* their master because they have little will beyond him, and he has formed their characters for the time, but give them another master and try! Even on the face of the statement some boys write differently. The master has not the same influence with them. They have more "character" than the others.

Thus, I think the argument as to "meaningless" and characterless writing falls to the ground. The cases adduced by Mr. Spooner will not stand the test from the graphologist's point of view. By "accident," or by continual association, people may write alike; but the accident is the accident of similarity of disposition and character, and association will mould one disposition to another. If girls write like their mothers it is not because they

"copy" their mother's writing; it is because their mother's characteristics are reproduced in them.

There is a considerable approximation, as Mr. Spooner says, to the men's handwriting by women of the present day, and he goes on to say that women have "copied" the handwriting of the men. In most cases—save where a lady may be writing business circulars, and adopts, temporarily, a more manly hand—I venture to say that this change is in the *occupations* of women—the change in their lives, thoughts—and is the outcome of higher education, greater cultivation, and in the fact of the women treading on men's heels in every path of life, even outstripping them in many ways. Graphologists maintain that it is much less "external influence" than internal (brain) influence that alters the writing. An artistic, somewhat sensuous, determined woman will give us rounded, graceful capital letters, and thick writing; sometimes eccentric forms of letters, which denote originality of mind, thickly crossed "t's," which denote will, obstinacy, and so on. This is the very last woman likely to "copy" anything! Her masculine, original hand gives us an independent and determined character, which makes her write as she does. Mr. Spooner hits the right note when he says that "the untidy writing of mathematicians arises from their thoughts so constantly outstripping their power of expression in words." But if so, surely the copying, or "imitative," argument is cancelled! If the brain be admitted to have play in a man, why not in a woman and a schoolboy? Is not this admission inconsistent with previous criticism of the contributor aforementioned?

Literary men, too, of impulsive imagination and of much energy, often write most indifferent hands—illegible, I mean. Take the late Walter Thornbury, the "Etrick Shepherd," Macaulay, Byron, Fenimore Cooper, and the living (and long may he live) James Payn. These men are types of most imaginative and *rapid* writing. Some persons will doubtless cite "George Eliot" as an instance to the upsetting of my argument, but I *fancy*, for I do not *know*, that "George Eliot" did not write in a hurry; she had a splendid imagination, but she (I should judge) did not "dash off" her MS. Her clear writing is expressive of intellect and a carefully produced narrative—not a story thrown off from the quick-working, restless brain of a sensitive, energetic, perhaps irritable writer.

If any one can compare the handwritings of illustrious personages, he or she will at once perceive how the characteristics of the individual are reproduced. Look at Mr. Gladstone's firm, tenacious, "tactful," rather sensuous, but energetic, quick-tempered writing. His obstinate bars to the *t's* show despotism; the angularity of the letters, quick temper; the undulating writing, *finesse*; the thickness of it, firmness, obstinacy, love of enjoyment of a more or less physical character, and so on. Oliver Cromwell wrote a bold, steady hand; so did the Eighth Harry, and Charles the First a

fine open, candid, *weak* hand, irresolute to a degree; while his son Charles wrote a very "dissimulating" hand.

Lord Tennyson, again, is clear and classic; Washington wrote a manly hand; Moore, the poet, an easy-going, careless, running hand, as of a man easily influenced by his surroundings; Wendell Holmes, a graceful, finished hand; Mary, Queen of Scots, an elegant, sensuous hand, gentle, and yet with traces of firmness, though simple; Elizabeth's hand is severe and bold. So instances might be adduced almost *ad infinitum* to prove that the writing is due to the brain and not to "external" influences, as has been said.

I cannot say that I agree in the dictum that a man's signature is the most conscious and the "less spontaneous" part of his writing. On the contrary, I fancy it will be found that a man seldom writes his signature exactly the same six times running. Ask any bank cashier and he will tell you his experience. I believe the signature is the true expression in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, and for this reason. A man may take great pains to conceal his thoughts in a letter, but having finished and read it, being satisfied, he would not wish to dissemble his signature, and it would be with a natural feeling of relief that he would sign his name—for why dissemble it? His name, written by himself, is always valid; he has no need to alter it, save for bodily infirmity, or for some reason which will not bear investigation—a very unlikely case. It is conceivable that a man may alter his writing as a whole, but why alter his signature only? My own impression is that a person's signature is usually spontaneous, and an excellent index to his character. It varies often in details—a fact which tends to prove its spontaneity. It responds to the change of feelings.

Graphologists do not claim to "tell a person's history" from their handwriting. So far as I am aware the mental and bodily characteristics are indicated, and then a critic will evolve a very excellent delineation of character from the writing. Of course practice is required. Whist and billiards require practice; chemistry and other sciences also. So with palmistry and graphology. When one understands the basis of these sciences the details are only matters of application. Mr. Spooner remarks, "There are people to be found who believe in palmistry!" If he would study palmistry he would believe in it too. It is merely because people confuse "chiromancy" with gipsy fortune-telling that they pooh-pooh palmistry and kindred sciences. Those who do not understand are always the most contemptuous critics. But to be a true critic one ought to understand the thing criticised.

I could give instances in which I have told character by handwriting with correctness which appeared astonishing to any one who had not studied the principles. And in nations as in individuals. There is a grace in the Italian, and sentimentality; a pride in the Spanish types; an argumentative and self-contained

look about German calligraphy, with all its long letters, of music and imagination. The vivacity of the Frenchman and the sturdiness of the average Briton are also observable when their writings are compared.

There is no sex in writing, as we have seen. Sir Arthur Helps said that prime ministers have generally been good writers, and surely if haste and business influenced us more than brain these gentlemen would have been excused if they had written badly. But they wrote well! The Iron Duke, Lords John Russell and Palmerston, Sir R. Peel and others wrote well. Surely brain and thought had something to do with such clear correspondence, not "outside influence."

Georges Sand adopted a manly writing for press purposes, yet her own unstudied writing had something manly in it. We may likewise adopt a handwriting, but I maintain that given a true, natural specimen of writing, it is perfectly possible to deduce the general character and disposition. And as regards failures and successes which Mr. Spooner compares. What are the failures? Who can tell what his friend is? Was it not Wendell Holmes who said a man had three individualities—the man as known to himself; the man known to his fellow-man; and the man known to his Maker? This is true as anything can be; and so when you tell Smith that his dearest friend is a liar, selfish and tyrannical, he denies it because *he* thinks Jones charming and frank, his very frankness being a cloak for untruth and meanness. The failures are often only failures *d'estime*; they are true, in fact, though the man himself only knows *how* true. People are very often hypocrites, self-deceivers, and think they can remain undetected. Unless they write a feigned or forced hand—an unnatural hand—they will be patent humbugs to the graphologist.

Was an open "gushing" nature ever known to close the loops of o's and a's? Was a self-contained person ever known to keep the loops open? Why do energetic, successful men write with an upward tendency, and the weak, the desponding, the sickly—those who have the germs even of death present in them—write a descending hand?\* Why does the critic divide his letters, and the man of connected ideas keep them together? Why do the romantic and sentimental write sloping hands, with long-tailed and headed letters, and the selfish and stingy write uprightly and "dock" their loops?

I could give instances and examples of all these, but have already said enough. Handwriting is an excellent guide to character if the rules of common-sense and observation be regarded. Experience is doubtless necessary as in all else, but when experience is gained it will be seen that there is more in graphology than most people think, or are willing to admit.

NOTE.—I possess an autograph of Rudolf of Austria, written a few hours before his death, in which the fall of the "hand of Fate" is very evident. He was doomed then!



## A TWILIGHT STORY.

By C. H. D. STOCKER GIGLIOLI.

AUTHOR OF "BETWEEN THE ACTS."

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"Love is and was my King and Lord,  
And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompassed by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
Who moves about from place to place,  
And whispers to the worlds of space,  
In the deep night, that all is well."—*In Memoriam.*

WHEN the past holds the completed action of our life, and the present seems scarcely more than a patient waiting, the future no longer a boundless vista of happy possibility, but a narrow and ever narrowing shadow-ground betwixt us and a life more real than that which is ebbing from us; then, speaking in the perfect tense, we can tell the story of ourselves of long ago, and scarcely realize that we and they were once so closely intertwined.

Aye it is long, long ago, and I that sit here alone, hearing the clock tick and the noisy spring wind blow about the house in the twilight, staring into the quiet fire till my eyes ache and grow dim—I am not young, nor merry, nor lovely. If they who knew and loved me years ago could come now and look into the room and see me sitting here, they would surely turn away and say, "That is not Jeanie Dalrymple; she had sunny brown hair and brown laughing eyes, and merry dimples always ready to play hide and seek with quick smiles among the red roses in her cheeks. We never knew this sad-eyed, faded woman."

Ah, no! and alas! they can never come and look in upon my loneliness. Were it not for an old heartache that I have, I could think that the Jeanie Dalrymple whom they knew is dead; even that I remember the day she died; even that I could show you her grave if your eyes could see what mine see when the spring sunset fades and the light dies away, and that rushing wind plays among the leafless trees. There are other graves near it, and sunshine and flowers on its distant further side; but this side is all in shadow—evening shadows are very long—and here are no flowers, nor anything to mark the way any more.

I was English governess in a large school in North Germany. Not that I had any special aptitude or love for teaching, but orphaned, poor, and almost without friends, there was nothing else open to me, and I boldly took the first situation that offered.

My ignorance of other languages was perhaps my greatest recommendation to my employers, besides which I was naturally what is called obliging, and anxious for the approval of my betters and the affection of my pupils. I suppose I attained my modest ambition, for I was very happy in my new country, and never fretted for any other home. But there is still a deep, wonderful mystery to me in the destiny that led me, a lassie reared among the moors and hills of Scotland, across the sea, to cast in my lot among a strange people; that wove my strand of life into that alien warp and woof, while yet neither I nor those other two whose fates were leagued with mine, divined the subtle intertwining of the bonds which even Death, though he might sever them, could nevermore unravel nor resolve.

Looking back into those happy days, I cannot tell how it began, nor when it was that I first knew I had something to hide, and feared to raise my eyes to his as hitherto, and felt my heart leap and tremble at the sound of his voice in the corridors or his foot-step outside the door. He came and went as he liked in the great resounding, carpetless house, and was more like a younger brother of the two elderly Fräuleins who directed the school, than only Herr Meyer, who lectured on History, Literature, and Art. I know not how it was that he held this curious position among us; the other professors and teachers went straight to their class-rooms when they came, and straight out of the house when their work was done, unless specially sent for. But it never seemed to occur to Herr Meyer that the house was not his as long as he chose to walk about it. He used to pace the wide corridor that overlooked the court-yard, his shoulders a little rounded, his hands clasped behind him, his head bent, and would nod and smile absently at any of us who went by. Sometimes the fancy took him to go into the Green Room—Fräulein Krüger's sitting-room—where we only penetrated for occasional reprimands or courts-martial on week days, or for coffee and extra cakes on Sunday afternoons; in he would stroll, with scarcely a tap at the door, and continue his measured pacing there. Or he would suddenly open the door of the class-room where I sat superintending the girls' preparation, and stand smiling in the doorway and saying:

"Ja, ja, Kinder! So geht es in der Welt!" A remark he made at least a dozen times a day. Or he would come and seat himself on the table and talk to us as if to him all learning were a thing of naught. Compared to *his* learning, I daresay all that feeble pottering of girls over books that most of them only longed to have done with, was indeed of no account. So there he sat and kept us in fits of laughter at his jokes and stories, or his extrava-

vagant buffoonery. Sometimes he acted or performed conjuring tricks, or declaimed poetry with animated gestures; sometimes it was a lesson in English that he must have, but his real knowledge of it surpassed mine, though his accent was incorrigibly bad; or he would volunteer to teach me German; or set the children to tell him fairy-tales, and all at once, in the middle of it, he would just walk off and leave us disorganized and dull and disinclined for work. I believe his mind was often occupied with quite other things all the time; and it was his utter absence of self-consciousness, such as one meets with only in noble natures or among clever men, that enabled him to be so extraordinary, so natural, so irresistibly ridiculous, and withal so lovable. As for his marvellous knowledge, spreading broad and deep over his own great special studies, and running besides into a hundred by-channels of curious lore, language, natural history, archæology, and many other subjects that only did not rise to the surface because there was nothing in his surroundings to draw it up—no one knew how he acquired it all, unless he had the enviable faculty of working all night as well as all day. When I first saw him he was about eight-and-thirty; a big, tall man, who would have looked taller but for that slovenly, student gait and carriage that he had; he was well off, for a German, but his dress was always desperately shabby and untidy; I don't think he knew what he wore, and his thick, dark hair, sprinkled with grey, hung long about his collar in a way I never could endure before or since, or in any one but him; just as his eccentric ways would have been insufferable in Herr Dr. Plettner, Herr Jäger or any of the others. His forehead was immense, his features fine, his mouth was hidden by a bushy, dark moustache, but his broad chin and cheeks were shaven and had that blue look that ought really to be ugly, but to a woman, or at least to me, is nothing of the kind. His prominent, long brows made such a shadow that one could not be sure what colour his eyes were; but I know they were blue, as blue as the sky and sea used to be in those days. With the same easy naturalness and oddness that characterized everything he said and did, he called all the girls by their Christian names, or composed funny diminutive pet-names or nick-names for them, and he never called me anything but "Meess Sheanie," except when he calmly dropped the "Miss." And I, uneasily reflecting at my solitary leisure or in wakeful watches of the night that I was sadly wanting in dignity and maidenly reserve, never brought myself to utter one protesting word to belie the pleasure it gave me to hear him call me so.

Well, the months fled by and my smooth life-stream was troubled with a wandering under-current of unrest, which deepened and flowed faster as time went on. For brief hours of unquestioning, reckless happiness I paid long days and longer nights of miserable doubt and anxiety and passionate tears. And still, somehow—perhaps because I was such a mere girl—my spirits were merry

enough as long as I was not alone; nothing spoiled the colour in my cheeks or the brightness of my eyes, and with help of all the little pride I had I kept my heart hidden from all the world.

Happy or miserable, I never asked myself how it was to end; those were days of beginning only, when if I expected anything at all, it was only vaguely that each to-morrow would be happier than to-day. If he came and sat by me and read or talked with me, or made me sing to him or give him a lesson, I was more than content; if he ignored me I cried when I lay in bed at night, with my head under the pillow for fear the girls should hear. I had been a year in the school when one day he found me marking a set of new handkerchiefs with my monogram in satin stitch, and he must needs examine and admire, and the children looked up and cried out that there was nothing I could not do with my needle and my fingers. And he stared at me a long while as I sat there bending my face over my work, and then he sighed and muttered his favourite remark softly to himself, "Ja, ja, Kinder! So geht es in der Welt! Ja, ja, Sheanie, you will make the very best wife of all the women I know."

He said it quite absently, and I knew the children were smiling at each other across their copy-books.

"I'll bring you my handkerchiefs to mark like that for me," he added tranquilly.

If he had ordered me to weave them I would have done it gladly, and in a few days he came into the class-room and put them down before me. I was alone, as it happened, and he sat down on the table as he so often did and watched me. I know now what was passing in his dreamy, unpractical, simple mind—simple, because it had no alloy of self, self-love, self-interest; anything but simple in its strange tangle of noble ideas and helpless unworldliness. But at the time I could not know; and whether my temper was ruffled that afternoon, or whether it was that I was nervous and shy at being alone with him there and at his long, strange silence, I cannot tell, but I grew vexed with him and with myself. I felt bitterly ashamed, for the first time, of having given unasked and beyond recalling all that I had to give to this man, who evidently classed me with the other children and played with me as he played with them. I felt it was my own fault for allowing him the liberty he had taken, and then my cheeks suddenly grew burning hot under his eyes, and when he spoke I was in a mood to avenge my pride at any cost.

"It is very good of you to do all these for me," he said at last, with a huskiness that the commonplace words could never have warranted.

"They're not done yet," I said shortly.

I knew then that he was nervous, my heart divined the cause and beat very fast, but I would not part with my ill-temper all at

once now that I had let him see it. Oh! it was such a little thing that unkind mood of mine that day; but it had a double, deadly edge; it was not fit for a plaything, nor was that an hour for me to have been playing. My tone hurt him and I was pleased and miserable at once.

"Oh, Jeanie!" he said in gentle, grieved surprise.

"Herr Meyer, I wish you would not call me by my Christian name; I don't like it."

"Is that true?" he said very earnestly. "Do you mean that?"

I answered instantly, but there had been a desperate struggle in my heart. The tears were creeping up in my throat, but my pride was forcing them down; I wanted to look up and smile away the evil spirit that was parting us, to say I was sorry, and never mind if the foolish tears choked my voice; but I wanted, too, to show him that I was not a child to be trifled with; that I could be dignified when I chose, and that he was not always to have everything exactly his own way.

And I let the evil spirit have its way, and because the lump in my throat was choking me I spoke rather loud and sharp lest he should divine how near I was to tears, and I said:

"Certainly I mean it. I have always thought it a great liberty on your part."

I suppose I meant him to persuade me out of my bad temper, but he never suspected me of deliberate untruth; he believed me, and after a moment's dead silence he rose to go away.

"I am a rude, ill-mannered fellow, Miss Dalrymple," he said with honest regret, "I will not do it any more."

I had not a word to say. He lingered, and his eyes, I suppose, fell on the handkerchiefs he had brought for me to work.

"Miss Dalrymple, I daresay—perhaps—perhaps you never meant me to—to take the liberty of really asking you to do all that beautiful work for me? I ought never to have asked it—let me take them away."

My anger was all gone, but not my pride, and I laughed. "Oh! no," I said, almost in my natural tone, "please don't do that. I shall have plenty of time to do them in Trudchen von Pawels' detention hours."

"Ach! das arme Trudchen! poor little Trudchen!" he said with a touch of the wonderful tenderness he had for all young creatures, although they must have tried him very sorely as pupils, "das arme Trudchen!" and he went away, supposing himself altogether in the wrong and bearing me not the slightest spark of ill-will.

Trudchen was my very naughtiest and most troublesome pupil. There was never a day when I did not have to find fault with her; seldom a half-holiday afternoon when she was not detained in school with a punishment lesson or arrears of scamped work, on

which occasions I of course was detained too, to see that it was done.

The professors and Mademoiselle had long since given her up, expecting nothing from her and tacitly ignoring her idleness because they held her incorrigible. I, however, was new to my work and saw promise in the idle ones and redeeming points in the black sheep, and I believed that Trudchen might yet be made to work and behave like a young lady instead of like the strange wild thing she was. She was often so near the very verge of being tractable that the scale was only turned as it were by a hair's weight; it seemed really only by an unfortunate succession of chances that it was always turned the wrong way.

How it was I don't know, but I was fonder of Trudchen than of all the rest, however admirable their conduct might be, and in her fashion she was fond of me. She used to bring me great bunches of forget-me-nots, lilies of the valley, wallflowers, a handful of lilac or roses—whatever was in season—and lay them on my desk with probably a vague idea of propitiating me, or atoning in some degree for the execrable exercise or hap-hazard repetition that she was going presently to inflict upon me.

All these had to be sternly ignored until the lesson was over, and I put them aside that the sight of them and Trudchen's appealing eyes might not combine to overpower my artificial severity.

"Will Trudchen get through without disgrace to-day?" I used to ask myself as I went to my class-room with a foreboding mind, and my lesson was generally closed by her flinging her arms round me, in spite of my dignified, reproachful air, and saying as she held me fast and insisted on looking into my averted eyes, "Ach, Dalrymplechen!" (She never would call me Miss Dalrymple.) "Liebes Dalrymplechen! Sind Sie mir böse?"

"Speak English, Trudchen."

"Are you me busy!" Oh! her English was enough to break one's heart!

"Busy, Trudchen! How can you? What is böse?"

"I know it not, Dalrympling—wollen mal deutsch sprechen. Laugh you now."

"No, Gertrude; you are too naughty. Would any one believe that you have been learning English for nine years?"

"What say you, Dalrymplechen?—Ach! Sehen Sie doch nicht so böse aus! Kiss me once, liebes Dalrymplechen—ach! kiss once!—laugh you!—laugh you!—Ah! she laugh now."

"Yes, you make me laugh. You must say laugh, not 'laugh you,' and böse is cross. Do speak English."

"Ja, Dalrympling—das will ich—morgen—to-morrow—ganz gewiss—I—verspreche es—wie heisst *versprechen*, Dalrymplechen?"

"I promise," said I with a weary sinking of heart. It was just like sowing seed in a whirlwind.

"Und Sie sind mir nicht böse, Dalrymplechen?"

"Oh, Trudchen!" this in despair.

"And you me not—ach! das alte dumme Englisch!—cross!—you me not cross?"

"Yes, I am vexed with you," I said sorrowfully.

"Armes Dalrympling! Poor old Dalrympling! Sie ist ja wirklich böse—she really cross. Adieu, poor Dalrympling! Ich finde Sie grausam——"

"Cruel," I corrected.

"Ja, Sie sind ein Gräuel," in tones of virtuous reproach.

"A horror," I put in inflexibly.

Trudchen merely shook her head, "Wie können Sie nur so grässlich sein?" she went on in the same tone.

"Say, 'How can you be so horrid?' No, Trudchen, it is no use. Let me go."

"Kiss once, then—I speak English, Dalrymplechen—kiss once, and I go already."

It always ended in her extorting a kiss and making me feel myself a heartless tyrant.

I cannot explain the fascination she had for me. She certainly was not pretty; just a tall, slim slip of a thing of fifteen or so, with thin, irregular features and a nose "tip-tilted like the petal of a flower," a mass of wavy dark hair arranged in two long, rough plaits, tied very generally with odd ribbons—one pink and one blue—great dark passionate eyes, and a flush, a smudge, a violent dab of red on each brown cheek, as untidily "scumbled" on as everything else about her. However, there *are* people whom one loves for no reason at all; they steal one's heart and give one nothing—absolutely nothing in return.

We had gone through our usual little scene one morning about a week after my foolish quarrel with Herr Meyer. "Must I come this afternoon, Dalrymplechen?" Trudchen demanded (in German, of course) in her most seductive tones. "Say no, my old one!" and she put a persuasive hand on each of my shoulders and smiled into my face.

"Certainly you must," I replied, trying to turn away, and positively astonished at her unblushing effrontery—common as it was—for she had not attempted a single word of her exercise, and as for her English poetry, without once reading it through she had boldly risen in her place and endeavoured to repeat it by inspiration, had of course failed glaringly, and set the whole class laughing at her, which was just what she enjoyed. And then to suppose that she would not be kept in! "I'm amazed at you," I said. "Come at half-past two."

With a volley of German expletives she flung me from her in a pet, hurled all her books with a bang and a crash on to one of the desks, darted a resentful glance at me through swimming tears, and ran out of the room. I followed her to the door and saw her snatch her hat from the stand in the corridor as she passed.



"Don't keep me waiting, Trudchen," I called out after her, as she ran down the stairs, but she did not even turn her head, and the next minute the street door slammed violently.

I stood in the corridor and watched the children from the sixth class coming down from their class-room on the next floor. These tiny creatures were a refreshment to me, they did not learn English. I should rather say, they did not have to be taught it, for I don't know that my big girls learned it.

Fat and solemn, with their slates and satchels and knitting, their diminutive pigtails and tidy pinafores, they came carefully down, one step at a time, staring at me between the bannisters. My pet of them all was Trudchen's younger sister, an untidy scrap of a thing with a blaze of rough red hair and large brown eyes like Trudchen's; I would have given a half-holiday for a genuine hug from those tiny arms, and a spontaneous kiss from that wicked little mouth. I was unusually out of spirits that day; I had not even seen Herr Meyer all the week, and each day that defeated my intention of making friends and confessing myself utterly in the wrong made me more and more unhappy.

"Wanda," I said coaxingly, intercepting her at the foot of the stairs, "Wanda, will you show me your knitting?"

She looked at me gravely and shook her head.

"I should so like to see that stocking you are making," I said. "You might show it me. I am so unhappy, Wanda."

Her resolution wavered, she scrutinized my face more closely and then glanced at her little bit of grimy knitting—painful achievement of many patient hours—and back again at my face.

Another moment and the victory would have been mine; but, alas! the drawing-room door opened and Herr Meyer came out; he passed me with a grave inclination of his head, Wanda rushed up to him with outstretched arms and screams of baby laughter, and he picked her up and set her on his shoulder and they went off together in high glee, leaving me alone.

I was very wretched; I could have cried my eyes out, but my room was not only mine, and I could not go to dinner with red eyes and only half-conquered sobs and meet four-and-twenty pair of curious eyes. At half-past two I was in my class-room, although I knew Trudchen would not appear for at least ten minutes.

I stood humming at one of the windows watching the boarders walking in pairs up and down the courtyard below with their arms round each other's necks, chatting and laughing, for it was a half-holiday. Up above, amongst the red roofs, the jackdaws were fluttering about in the wind, and white clouds were sailing across the blue between the roof-ridges and my window frame. Through an opening between the houses I could catch a glimpse of glittering sea with white breakers and little brown sails that made one long to be out in the sun and wind. I was thinking that perhaps I ought to try some other plan with Trudchen. I knew she was

an orphan, a remote connection of Herr Meyer's, and that the home she had in the house of an uncle and aunt was anything but happy; that she and her little sister were absolutely dependent on this uncongenial charity, poor things. Perhaps it was useless for me to insist on the full measure of work, knowing how her home life handicapped her and dragged her down. I would talk to her very seriously, I thought, and reduce her work on condition——

Suddenly the door burst open, and Trudchen, radiant, panting, with glowing cheeks, rushed in and flung her arms round me with such energy that I had to cry out for mercy with what little breath I had left.

"Ach! Dalrymplechen, Dalrymplechen, Dalrymplechen!" she cried, hugging me violently and kissing me in the most reckless way, "I'm not coming back to school any more! No more old stupid English! No more nasty detention!" and she clapped her hands and danced round me, who stood there bewildered.

"Guess, guess, Dalrympling!" she said, standing still a minute, and then she began dancing round me again. "You never, never will."

"Come, that will do, Trudchen," I said, recovering my speech. "What do you mean?"

"I'm engaged to be married," she answered with a little war-hoop, hopping on one foot.

"*You*, Trudchen?" I cried aghast. "*You*? You're not sixteen. Impossible!"

"No! True, true, true!" cried Trudchen, shaking me vigorously. "You will see us driving round the town to-morrow, calling on all the acquaintance."

"But tell me," I panted, escaping from her, "tell me about him. You have kept it marvellously quiet, you harum-scarum creature!"

"Quiet!" she repeated; "why, I never gave him a thought till to-day. The uncle called me into the sitting-room and he rose from the sofa beside Tante Auguste and asked me if I would marry him. Ha, ha! Dalrymplechen! So I asked whether I would have to go to school any more, and whether I might be let off detention this afternoon if I said yes, and he was sure I might, and said I need never go to school any more. So I said yes!" Pronouncing the last word with a little shout, she began to dance again in ecstasy, till I felt quite giddy. "Don't be alarmed for my happiness, my old English one," said she embracing me fervently again, "for he is very well off; uncle said it. Now guess who it is."

"An officer, of course," I hazarded, for the town simply swarmed with handsome lieutenants.

"Ah, no; I wish he was," she said with momentary gloom.

I guessed a young doctor whose sadly unmarried state excited the compassion and interest of all the elder girls; and then some

of our partners at the last ball the Realschüler had given us at the Hotel Bismarck, but Trudchen only shook her dark, rough head and danced more ecstatically, and at last, delighted so thoroughly to have mystified me, she threw her arms round my neck with a tremendous hug and called out triumphantly, "Herr Meyer, Herr Meyer, Herr Meyer!"

The words rang in my head as if they would never cease vibrating there; I saw the door move and open gently, and Herr Meyer's face appear smiling there—he had been waiting outside all the time peeping in; something rose strangling in my throat, I tried to laugh, and when Trudchen relaxed her arms to rush and fling them round her betrothed, darkness closed about me, and I thought I should have fallen to the floor; but I *would* not give way; I caught the window-sill and got the window open, and the cold air revived me. I felt faint and sick, and must have looked white enough to frighten less pre-occupied people, but I thought Herr Meyer had not seen, and I made shift to smile and wish them happiness. And if the embrace I gave Trudchen at parting was stiff and cool, it was only that the least tenderness must have overmastered my faltering self-control.

When the two were gone I sat there like a stone, working at his last handkerchief till it grew too dark to see, and then I sat on the window-sill in a dull stupor, staring up at the gold-green sky and the faint stars with dry aching eyes that could not weep. Oh! Trudchen, Trudchen! I never envied you the happiness you seemed to take so lightly; the love I thought you could not understand—madcap child that you were!

But I could not stay on in the old place. I kept up heart, I know not how—only I think strength comes when our need is very sore—and I marked all Trudchen's handkerchiefs for her trousseau, and went with the rest to the wedding; and then, on the plea that the school work was too much for me, I gave up my place and took another in a private family on a country farm thirty miles inland. There I used to long and pine for the sea—just for a sight of the blue, sparkling Baltic, with its broken wavelets all dancing in the spring sunshine, as I remembered it on that terrible day; just for one breath of that keen salt air. But I stayed where I was, thinking I should never be happy again, though I did my best to work and play as the turn of each came round, and the very effort did me good. My former pupil wrote to me now and then at first, and then I completely lost sight of all my old friends, and clinging to my resolve never to go back, I spent my holidays where I was, and set myself to study German in earnest, living only in the moment—a strange cramped life—not able to look forward, not daring to look back; scarcely wishing myself dead, yet caring not at all to live.

At last, after two years, the parents of my pupils asked me if I would be willing to take them to town (as we called it) and stay there

with them a week or ten days, while they were under the hands of the dentist. I never thought of saying no, and we went. We had rooms at the Hotel Zum Kronprinzen, and I took the children to the dentist, and to visit their friends in the town, and shopped with them, walking along the familiar ways like one in a dream of other days. When they were in bed I used to throw a shawl round me and hurry out, thankful to be alone, and would go down to the harbour and walk up and down the quays in the spring twilight listening to the waves and the wind, and longing vainly for peace after my sore disquiet and unrest. I was walking so one evening up and down the windy quay, looking at nothing and thinking of nothing, but with that live-long torment keeping out the light and peace from my soul, when all at once he was there—Herr Meyer—holding out both hands for mine with a strange look in his eyes, half sorrowful reproach, half glad surprise.

"Ach, Jeanie!" he said, with a long sigh as of relief, turning to pace beside me, "I thought I—we—were never to see you again."

We walked up and down, up and down, till it grew dark; he asking me a thousand questions, and I answering with short, stupid sentences and long silences between. I could not talk to him somehow, and he felt it at last and grew silent too, and then I said I must go. I struggled with myself as we went up into the town, and when he was leaving me at the door of the hotel, I found courage to say falteringly:

"To-morrow is my last day—I—I—I will try, Herr Meyer—Trudchen——" but my foolish voice was beyond control, and failed for an instant, I was so nervous and unstrung, but I tried again. "To-morrow I should like to go and see——"

"Yes, yes," he interrupted, quickly understanding my stammering words, and then he added low, "Let me come for you; when do you think you will be ready?"

I had to take the children to a coffee-party in the afternoon, and then I knew I would be free to do as I pleased, so I fixed five o'clock, and he came for me the next evening just as the chimes were ringing.

All the morning a soft still rain had been falling, but the sun was shining then, and the blackbirds sang in the Bürgergarten and in the budding horse-chestnuts on the boulevard as we went along. I had never been in his house since his marriage, and did not even know where it was, so I left the way to him, and knowing his odd moods of old, I did not wonder at his silence. Besides, my heart was full, for all the trouble had passed away, and I felt I could be brave to face the rest of my life, and not be unhappy and hard and thankless any more. I sometimes think that was the happiest hour of my whole life; even now the memory of it is blessed to me; but at the time it left no room for other thought or sight or sound, and when at last his voice broke the

silence which had wrapped us both, it was as if I had been wakened from a deep dream.

I looked up at him a little bewildered, and saw his eyes full of tears; mine fell again and rested on a grave at our feet. We were in the cemetery, with cypresses and leafless willows and graves all round us, and Trudchen and her baby lay buried there under the grass and the ivy, and this was the second spring that had seen the snowdrops nodding on her grave. The floodgates of my tears, fast locked these two years long, were broken down and swept away on the storm tide of overwhelming pity and sorrow, and with a cry I fell down, my arms across the grave and my face upon them in an agony of weeping.

It was not till then that he saw I had never heard of it, and realized what a shock it was to me, who had just been expecting to see her full of life as of old.

He let me cry—I don't know how long—but at last he raised me and made me come away. We walked once or twice up and down the cypress alleys while I tried to stifle my sobs, and he told me quietly and sadly the little there was to tell, and then he took me back into the town.

So I went away home to the country with the children, sad at times, and yet happier than I had been all the last two years, because I knew I had conquered myself. The lessons no longer seemed dreary, nor the play a burden. I think the children felt a difference, for they made more demand upon my leisure, and called me away from my books to many a romp in the farm-yard, and hide-and-seek among the straw heaps and in and out of barn and byre. "We never knew you could run so fast, Miss Dalrymple," they gasped breathlessly one evening, when I had caught them one after another, and we had all flung ourselves down panting in the straw, "but we shall take care you do not catch us again." "We shall see," I returned laughing, as I twisted up my dishevelled hair, and they ran off and hid, and the chase began again. We all ran our very hardest, laughing and screaming, and I was aware, as I flew along, that Frau Schütt had come out to watch us from the seat under the lindens before the door. Little Marie bolted round the corner of the barn, and I ran through to catch her as she passed the further door, and rushed straight into the arms of some one who seemed to rise from the ground solely for the purpose of discomfiting me. I retired a step, pouring out German apologies, but I was answered in English, in the bad accent I knew so well, and there was Herr Meyer laughing at me.

"Oh!" I panted, conscious now of my untidy hair and the little bits of straw that littered me from head to foot. "Oh, Herr Meyer!"

But I supposed he divined that I was glad at the sight of him, for he took my hands without any preamble, quite heedless

of the nearing shouts of the children, and said, "Jeanie, I can't do without you. I have come to ask you if you can love me and be my wife. Oh! answer nothing but the very truth."

He might well say so to me, knowing as he had known now these two years that I had said words to him that were not true, and gone near to make shipwreck of his life and mine. And I knew it too, now, though in his loyalty to the dead he never breathed one word of explanation to me. He would have asked me that day to be his wife; he married Trudchen because he believed I had never cared and could never care for him, and because his good heart ached for the poor motherless, wayward, lovable child in her wretched home.

I could not speak, but I looked up in his face and saw it shining in the sunset, yet with a light that never any sunset shed, and he knew all I could not say, and was quite content.

Ah! if only we two could have passed then beyond the reach of time and earth's mischance!

And yet I know not that I would have it so, for in sorrow of heart and loneliness I have found depths and heights all unknown to smoother ways. Love once born can never die; many waters cannot quench it; neither time nor tears can touch it. Ask me not how long we walked together on this beautiful earth—this earth we call unhappy because we will not see the blessed gifts of God around us—for in truth I cannot tell; love is its own eternity, and knows nor change, nor parting, nor death, and when he passed onward with the dawn-light of the eternal morning on his face he bade me bless God for the happy sunshine of the day gone by and walk patiently among the lengthening shadows until the twilight merges into that eternal dawn.

And now when the wild March wind beats about the doors, or the blackbirds sing at sunset after the rain, the lonely years slip and shrink together and roll away, and my spirit carries me back beside the barren Baltic shores, shining now all transfigured and beautiful through the mist of many tears, in the sunlight of immortal love.

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## WHEN THOU ART GONE.

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WHEN thou art gone, what will be life to me ?

Oh, less than yonder empty shell that lies,  
Flung by the motion of the restless sea,  
Broken upon the shore. My spirit cries  
To thee, and nestles in thy sheltering breast,  
Serene and tranquil as the days glide on ;  
But ah, my love, where shall it find its rest  
When thou art gone ?

To thee I owe the gladness of the days,  
The glory of the nights—the melody  
Of bird-songs dedicated to thy praise ;  
For all sweet things of earth seem part of thee.  
I have been joyous as the laughing flowers,  
Making thy heart my tribunal and throne.  
Whose hand shall guide—whose voice enchant the hours  
When thou art gone ?

Yet thou, that art my universe—in whom  
Health, life, hope, joy, for me embodied live—  
Be still my star, resplendent through the gloom,  
Lighting the way whereon I toil and strive.  
Direct and conquer my rebellious will,  
Bend down those eyes that on my youth have shone,  
Lend me the grace of thy protection still  
When thou art gone.

MARIE CONNOR.



## DUCHESS FRANCES.

By SARAH TYTLER,

AUTHOR OF "CITOYENNE JACQUELINE," "SAINT MUNGO'S CITY," "LADY BELL," ETC.

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### CHAPTER XVI.

#### ADVERSITY.

FRANCES' grief was stormy and overwhelming for the hour during which she remembered vividly her young lover as well as her young husband and the father of her children, in the happy days spent at the gay family house at Knightsbridge, where she found abundant consolation for the mortification she had sustained at the hands of Harry Jermyn.

Cherry wept with her cousin for the loss of the gallant gentleman her courteous host. Elizabeth de Gramont, with Anthony and the younger Hamilton brothers, mourned a brother who had done them honour. Frances found no lack of sympathy, while she was speedily roused from her personal grief to face the worldly ruin of herself and her three young daughters, and to fight against it with all the energy of a strong fighter who had never affected to be anything else than set on temporal prosperity.

Cherry, in her double capacity of companion to her cousin and *gouvernante* to the children, was present at the interview which Frances sought and got from Louis XIV. in one of the ante-chambers of the Louvre. Not only the young widow, but the little girls and Cherry thrown into the bargain, were all in the deepest weeds, with sable mantles and veils trailing on the ground, so that the wearers formed a lugubrious procession. Louis had no taste for the lugubrious. He hastily raised Frances from her kneeling attitude, and signified to the others, who had been kneeling also, to rise likewise, expressed briefly but not ungracefully his regret for the loss of a brave servant, graciously announced that Madame la Comtesse's name would be at once placed on the pension list of France, and passed on, dismissing the sufferers and the subject from his royal consideration as swiftly as possible.

"At least we shall be better off than the nuns of Soppington," said Frances hysterically to Cherry, referring to an old tradition down at Holywell that the nuns from a neighbouring nunnery had brought their dry crusts to soak in the well, hence the name.

Frances and her brood were removed from starvation, from penury even, while it need hardly be said that she regarded her pension as far beneath her deserts and those of her late husband. She had come, too, to look on Cherry's devotion as a matter of course. It was the girl's nature to cling all the more closely in adversity, so that if she had been Frances' servant before, it stood to reason that she was her slave now.

Frances was not under the necessity of quitting her *faubourg* and *hôtel*. She had simply to mount with her family a stair or two higher, and deposit herself under the garrets, which, to be sure, were let, in their turn, to mechanics and sewing-girls. But from this elevated region it was impossible for the pensioned widow either to claim or dispense her share of the festivities as she had been accustomed to do. Soon she chafed violently against the deprivation, for Frances would have been content in all sincerity to lament her husband in a whirl of company, from which she could not live apart. Looking back on that generation, it seems as if its sorrows and joys were curiously muddled up together, when they did not receive an exaggerated expression individually, and certainly Frances bore no resemblance to the young widow her contemporary, who would have no light about her save that of candles for three, and never went out of doors for five years. Yet, alas! for the instability of all things, intensest grief included, it remains to be said of this Penelope that at the end of nine years she entertained a passion of love for the man who became her first husband's successor.

Frances murmured indignantly at the niggardliness of the king and country her brave husband had served with his life; though if France had been forced to pension every soldier of fortune who fought and fell in her cause, her pension list would have been full indeed.

Count George's widow complained pettishly of Count George's sister, Countess Philibert de Gramont, for not exerting herself to get more done for her relations, and for being so heartless as to resume the round of splendid gaieties from which Countess George was—not so much because of her widowhood as because of her narrow means—thenceforth excluded. No doubt it lent an additional sting to the retirement she loathed, that it was compulsory, not voluntary.

Anthony Hamilton had no real love for courts and crowds, he preferred to woo the muse in the sylvan shades of St. Germain, and would fain have induced his sprightly sister to withdraw from pernicious and perilous gilt fetters, to join him in his peaceful retreat. He politely pressed Frances to take the initiative, but she flatly refused, to Cherry's great disappointment, and was more angry than her sister-in-law Elizabeth showed herself at the idea of being buried alive in a forest, always except when the court was there.

A couple of years after Frances was left a widow, two events happened over in England which seemed to give the finishing touch to her misfortunes. Sister Sarah, as wilful and hot-headed as the little Sal of old, or as her sister Frances at all times, married at the age of eighteen the man of her choice, handsome, silver-tongued John Churchill, who had this supreme merit in her eyes, that while faithless to all else, he was ever faithful to her. She thus dealt a death blow for the time to the fond hopes entertained by her mother—even by Frances in her adversity—that Sarah was to make such a good sale of her beauty and wit, she was to redeem and elevate the fortunes of the whole family. So little likelihood was there of this desirable result at the time of Sarah's marriage, and so great was the opposition apprehended from the heads of the houses of Churchill and Jennings, that the ceremony was performed privately, though it was graced by the presence of Mary Beatrice, Duchess of York. For some months afterwards, while Colonel Churchill rejoined the army abroad, his wife continued to bear the name of "Mrs. Jennings," to which she was no longer entitled.

"So Sal has gone and done for herself as I did," remarked Frances sardonically. "Well, I suppose there is a fate in these things, but I can see now it is monstrous hard on madam my mother. An' I thought my Bess, or Fanny, or Moll would play me such a trick, I'd lodge them in so many nunneries at once."

"But, but, cousin," remonstrated Cherry, hesitating and stammering, as the two walked together in those famous old gardens of the Luxembourg, with their "knots" of box, basins for "conservatory for snow," and "grove of tall elms, cut into a starr, every ray being a walk whose center is a large fontaine," "you do not mean to say you are sorry—that you regret having married as you did?"

"Having married my poor George, you mean?" said Frances straight out. "Not after I once saw his face," she admitted, with a little quiver of her voice. "He was as handsome as the day, as Churchill in quite another fashion. He was so brave, so loyal, so enamoured. Ah! who could have resisted my young hero?" she cried passionately. But I ought not to have been free to receive George Hamilton's addresses," she added after a moment's pause, in a totally different tone. "Before I set eyes upon him I played my cards vastly ill, and it was not so much that I had not mother-wit as that I was full of perversity and devilry. Take example by what I've come to, Cherry Thornhurst, not that you have any great chance of profiting by it nowadays, for this foolish step of sister Sarah's is like to be another obstacle to the acknowledgment of your marriage, which ought to have been confirmed and proclaimed ages ago. We'll have you as middle-aged and dowdy as myself anon.

"I don't care for that," replied Cherry quickly. "If you would

only leave that subject alone, I should be greatly obliged to you, cousin. Don't you think I'm old enough to take care of myself? Not that I do not take it kind of you to spare a thought for me, when you have so many cares of your own," wound up Cherry, repenting immediately of her asperity. "I desire nothing better than to be suffered to be with you and the girls always, at least, so long as I can be of any service to you."

Frances shook her head, gloomily for her. "You ought to think of yourself, all the more that there is no one else to think of you, to purpose. You owe me no thanks, Cherry. I have not been able to do much for you. As to speaking up for any marriage as you were speaking up for mine a minute ago, or for any man, dead or alive, it ain't called for from you. Marriages and men have not done you great service."

Cherry did not answer that she was above or below bearing malice. She said nothing, but as the pair came out by the church of the Holy Innocents and Cherry saw the clerks who were employed by "poor mayds and other ignorant people" to write letters for them into the country, "every large grave-stone serving for a table," she came to the conclusion that these daughters of the people were more their own mistresses than she, or perhaps Frances and Sarah Jennings, had ever been, and to revolve in her gentle mind the dubious benefit of being so much as allied to the quality.

The second event duly announced from England was of another complexion—the death, in her twenty-sixth year, of Bab Jennings, who had married Colonel Griffith, of Hertfordshire. Poor home-loving, dutiful Bab! She had made no stir in the great world like her sisters Frances and Sarah, but her father, if not her husband, would sorely miss her. The young wife and mother was laid early to rest with her only child, Barbara, by her side, in the family burial place in St. Albans, near the girl sister Susanna and the baby brothers Ralph and John, whom Bab in her youth had held in faithful, affectionate remembrance. When she had heard of Frances's widowhood and loss of means, Bab had at once written from England to her sister a kind if formal letter, containing a remittance as large as it was in the writer's power to bestow, with many careful housewifely charges as to how Frances ought to spare and spend the money, and anxious warnings lest she—Bab, though she would try—might not have funds wherewith to renew the gift annually.

Frances had received the gratuity with a short laugh and a careless, half-scornful assertion that the whole business was just like Bab's primness and timidity.

But now, when there could come no more sisterly letters and painful calculations undertaken by Bab for her "dear old Francie's sake," the said Francie cried impulsively that she had been a lone widow woman already, before the melancholy news came, but she

would be all the more lonesome since there was no Bab thinking of her and planning for her over in England.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## "MARRYING AND HANGING GO BY DESTINY."

ANOTHER year passed by when one day Frances mounted to her elevated quarters in a flutter of excitement. "Cherry, Cherry, I want to speak to you," she cried. "Go away, you brats, into the balcony and see what you can see for yourselves without being seen." She unceremoniously dismissed the three damsels who had been working and chattering beside Cherry. The eldest was by this time in her thirteenth year, well-nigh the age that was all to which Cherry had attained when she went through the fantastic ceremony of marriage still binding her to Peter Thornhurst with chains of iron or of gossamer as you liked to look at them. Even the youngest maid pricked her ears to hear what had happened out of the common to which their mother did not wish the girls to be privy.

"Whom do you think I've met at my Lady Clifford's? Guess among the old friends I have not seen for many a day. Oh! stuff and nonsense, Cherry," as the hot colour flamed into poor Cherry's cheeks and then fading, left them as wan as a ghost, while the ordinarily quiet, self-controlled woman began to tremble in every limb. "As if the world contained but one man and he thy fickle, mean-spirited partner; as if it was well to waste a thought on a fellow who, so far as he is concerned, has turned his back on thee. The man I speak of is worth a hundred sneaking, sordid-natured Peter Thornhursts. Why, he was my most devoted servant once upon a time, and I can tell you it would not take much to bring him to my feet again, though I'm as thin as a whipping-post, my lint white locks are beginning to fall off, I'm thirty years of age, the mother of another man's children, and my pension is a miserable pittance, a disgrace to King Louis. I only whisper it to you lest he issue a *lettre de cachet* and lay me in the Castle of Vincennes, or with the common herd in the Bastille."

"You have not said your friend's name," Frances was reminded by Cherry, who had got time to recover her composure.

"Haven't I? Then it is roystering Dick Talbot," a little defiantly, "and he swears he is as much a widower as I am a widow, for Madam Talbot, Mrs. Boynton that was, languished out of existence last March and left him with a solitary chick of a girl whom he hath left behind him in Ireland."

"What is he doing here?" asked Cherry dubiously. "Is he on his travels to divert his mind from his great loss?"

"Oh, this is good," cried Frances with the merriest laugh she

had laughed these three years, "as if Dick—swaggering, roving Dick—ever had a trouble which he could not whistle down the wind, or drink and dice out of mind in the space of a night! Thou silly wench, if he survived the loss of *me*, on whom he had set his heart, he could surely sustain the death of a wife who, poor soul—we'll be proper and pity her since she's dead—flung herself at his wagging head as is well known."

"He must have consented, cousin," objected Cherry with a faint smile.

"Ay, but a reluctant consent is another matter from a triumphant courtship and the desire of his heart granted to a man. You'll know that if you're ever married with a will, Mrs. Peter."

"I think I know it already," said Cherry in a low tone.

Frances was paying no heed to her. "No, no, poor old Dick—he do look a bit battered and the worse of the wear—hath had more serious matters on hand than his wife Catherine's death. Hast forgot that all England is agog at the present moment with its last mare's nest of a Popish plot? The villain Oates is false-swearing people's heads off by scores and scores. Naturally, being a Catholic, my beadsman Dick has been in trouble, as for that matter when was he out of it? He was accused of holding his Holiness's commission as commander of the forces in Ireland and clapped into prison in Dublin Castle, from which he made his escape. He is a regular hero of romance is brawny Dick, if one could believe a tithe of the tale he tells of his perils and adventures. But you will see and judge for yourself, Cousin Cherry, since my former swain hath announced his intention of puffing and blowing up all these stairs. I told him the number of steps fair and above-board, and that he would find me as poor as a church mouse at the top when he comes to wait on me to-morrow. But nothing I could say would hinder my gentleman from paying his duty. Dick Talbot is a gentleman, though I warn you he ain't any softer or tamer since I last sighted him, and, good lack! he was wild enough then."

Cherry saw for herself and was by no means favourably impressed, though Dick Talbot was sufficiently restrained by Frances' presence and influence to treat Cherry then, and during the whole of their future relations, with a half-sulky respect, instead of with the unbridled insolence and shameful licence which he was apt to display in his behaviour to women.

Ruffians like Dick, whether high or low, do not as a rule improve with years. The gloss of gallantry and daring which their unprincipled recklessness may have worn at first, is rubbed off and replaced by coarser elements of brutality. Even the elegant prodigal Comte Philibert de Gramont had not stood the test of time well. He was rapidly passing into a selfish, heartless voluptuary, whose transparent distorted vanity made him render himself ridiculous by boasting of conquests he had never achieved and of



excesses in which—wastrel as he was—he had never indulged. He could even descend to the meanness of availing himself of the literary capacity of his kinsman in exile and reduced circumstances, to write Gramont's memoirs while he, Gramont, a wealthy nobleman, after he was restored to his patrimony, pocketed the whole proceeds of the transaction. If the refined Gramont had fallen so low, what was to be expected from Dick Talbot? He was now well advanced in middle life, with all his vices intensified and aggravated. His stately figure was overgrown and showed traces of premature infirmity. His fine face was swollen and bloated with self-indulgence. His regardless habit of speech had grown upon him till it earned him the unenviable sobriquet of "Lying Dick Talbot."\* The volleys of blasphemous oaths with which he was given to seasoning his discourse were enough to have had him thrust out of any respectable—not to say reverent—house. His boisterous bragging was so exaggerated, and his violence when contradicted so destitute of the slightest restraint, that people began to think he was half mad, or on the way to be mad.

This was the man—satyr rather than man—who after she had broken off from him in her youth and his prime, fascinated Frances Hamilton in her maturity, whom she fascinated afresh and ruled to the last, if ever rational human being ruled a brute and lunatic. Surely it was a curious and notable detail in the history of these two famous sisters Frances and Sarah Jennings that they won, and held in mastery, throughout their married lives, two men so widely apart and yet so far alike in their defiance of the bonds of honour and the obligations of honesty as Dick Talbot and John Churchill.

The attractions which Dick Talbot had for Frances were complicated and manifold, and she did not refrain from pleading them to her cousin Cherry. She cared for him for old sake's sake, he talked to her and reminded her of the palmy days when she reigned a young queen of beauty and wit at Whitehall and St. James's. His conversation and visits, gross and offensive as they might appear to a strait-laced young madam, were a welcome relief to Frances, who had never pretended to be a saint, and could not reconcile herself to the deadly dulness and dreariness of her pinched and forlorn widowhood under the garrets. It was not to say that she had forgotten George Hamilton, who could not come back to her and her children, though she were minded, to replace him by one who had cared for her, in his own way, long before George had ever beheld her or she George. After all, perhaps, Dick Talbot was a better match for her in their common knowledge of the highly-spiced wicked world than her simple-minded soldier had been, and still the worldly advantages would all be on the side of Frances and her children. This was notoriously true in spite of Dick Talbot's being, like herself, under a cloud, and though

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\* Macaulay.



he must have been playing ducks and drakes with the great fortune which in former days Gramont had reckoned at forty thousand, and at the present date was measured at a paltry three or four thousand a year. But even three thousand odds were not to be despised in the meanwhile ; and when the treasonable bill for excluding the Duke of York from the succession to the throne was set aside, and James ruled in the place of Charles, then Dick Talbot would emerge from his passing obscurity, and it would go hard with him and Frances if they did not redeem his fortunes and plume their feathers with the best.

The last inducement to yield to Dick's frantically eager suit, was supplied by the tacit disapproval of the Hamilton family, who naturally did not like to have Count George's place filled by such a successor. In an unwary moment Elizabeth de Gramont asserted disdainfully that ages ago, even before Dick Talbot had paid his first court to Frances Jennings, the redoubtable man of many loves had been at her—Elizabeth's feet, where she had let him lie till he took himself off. How could Frances prove her disbelief of this affronting tale more effectually than by marrying Dick Talbot straightway?

If opposition to Frances' sovereign will had always been like holding up a red rag to a bull, it was as well for all concerned that Cherry was not in a position to contradict her patroness. When she found remonstrance was useless she could only regret to the bottom of her heart, stand by with shame and mortification and see the knot tied which in 1679 made Countess George, Madam Talbot.

Young Catherine Talbot, a girl of the age of the younger Hamiltons, was brought from Ireland and installed in the common nursery and schoolroom in the old Paris *hôtel*, to which another baby girl came later, little Charlotte Talbot, the last of Frances' children, to be placed in her cousin Cherry's arms and to find her best cradle there.

There is no reason for supposing that Frances did not act with a kind of rough and ready justice and good nature towards her dead rival's child. The few proofs are all to the contrary. Catherine was certainly closely associated with the other girls. There is a picture still extant in which she is represented a girl in her first teens, in company with her half-sister, the child Charlotte. But the elder girl did not live long to try her step-mother's fairness and kindness. Catherine Talbot died in 1684, five years after her father's second marriage and a year before the death of King Charles, and the succession of King James rendered it safe and advisable that the combined household should quit France and be established either in England or Ireland.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

"THE KING IS DEAD: LONG LIVE THE KING!"—A HARVEST OF  
HONOURS AND DIGNITIES—FINDING HUSBANDS FOR THREE  
PORTIONLESS GIRLS.

WHETHER or not Dick Talbot in the year of his marriage accompanied his master the Duke of York to England, where the duke was not suffered to stay, but was sent with his duchess down to Scotland, out of the public eye, while the bill for his exclusion from the royal succession on account of his public profession of the Roman Catholic faith, was still pressed upon Parliament by his political opponents and by the alarmed defenders of the Protestant religion, it is certain that when Charles made a death as unedifying as his life among his dissolute courtiers and rapacious mistresses at Whitehall, and James was proclaimed king, the Talbots were not far to seek. Husband and wife with their family of young girls and the family friend and ungrudging servant Cherry Thornhurst in the train of the mistress of the establishment, hurried home to come in for a share of the largesses to be distributed at the beginning of a reign.

It seemed to Frances that she had a double and triple right to what favours were going. She could bring forward Dick Talbot's sufferings at no distant date for religion and the king, and at an earlier date George Hamilton's deprivations and expatriation for the same cause, together with her own claims as a former maid-of-honour to the late Duchess of York, the mother of the Princesses Mary and Anne, the sole survivors of Anne Hyde's family of eight children. From Mary, Princess of Orange, the wife of the stout, surly champion of civil and religious liberty against *le Grand Monarque*, Frances had indeed nothing to hope. As for good-natured, dull Princess Anne, who had already been married to her equally lymphatic partner with the comprehensive generality of his favourite axiom, *est-il possible?* what benefits were to be expected from that source were certain to be monopolized by sister Sarah and her brilliant supple soldier of fortune. Why, Colonel Churchill was already created Baron Churchill of *Sandridge*, a special reference to his wife's future inheritance of her father's estate in Hertfordshire by the exclusion of her elder sister Frances, which was not calculated to improve the doubtful relations between the sisters. Still when one's interest is in question pride and a well warranted sense of injury must be put in the pocket, while there might be the reversion of sundry pickings from this quarter. And there was always the king himself for a sanguine woman to pin her faith to. If all tales were true Frances had not been particularly respectful to him in the old days, when strong-minded, sensible Anne Hyde was her mistress and his duchess;

but now the importunate claimant considered that her royal master would be an ingrate indeed if he declined to consider the obligations he owed to this formidable representative of both the Hamiltons and Talbots.

Frances had many greedy rivals who fast became her traducers to serve their own ends. Conspicuous among them was my Lord Perth, who had lately apostatised from his religion in the most flagrantly obliging manner. He earnestly advised his royal master, in strict confidence, to send Madam Talbot back to France on the plea of the French air being the best for her health. Perth described her to her old acquaintance as thoroughly detested in the country of her adoption; in fact, she was believed to have "the blackest heart" between the English Channel and the Pyrenees. But that was only Perth's opinion—the statement of a notorious sycophant and time-server, whose sincerity in his new religion was of such a doubtful character that within a few weeks of adopting it he married within the forbidden degrees of kindred, and did not so much as say "by your leave" to his holy father the Pope. Perth himself was living in a glass house so far as any esteem or respect from his countrymen went, therefore he ought not to have been so ready to throw stones at Frances. James the Second was not famous for his wisdom, but at least he knew better than to take Perth's advice in this matter.

Cherry, who asked nothing from anybody and for reasons of her own shrank into the background, looked round on England and London, the very language of whose inhabitants struck unfamiliarly on her ears—her dazzled eyes not taking in half of what she saw. It was well-nigh as strange to her as to the foreign-bred young girls, her kinswomen. She had left the country an unformed, impressionable girl of fourteen; she returned to it a quiet, subdued woman of thirty-three. At the same time, her very quietness and unselfishness had served to preserve her youth—had bathed it, so to speak, in a perennial flood of patience and devotion to others. This had kept it wonderfully fresh and sweet to the core, so that there was no room left for the fierce ravages of angry passions, and the slow but sure corroding of chronic egotism and discontent. It was no worn, haggard face which Cherry brought back to her native shore, but one fair and peaceful in its mature beauty.

In this respect Cherry presented a great contrast to her cousin Frances at forty-one years of age. Frances had certainly missed the bountiful buxomness in the three "fs" courteously accorded to her time of life. She was as she had said, as lean as a greyhound, with a needle-like sharpness in her little person which somehow fitted in not only with its intrepid spirit, but with its air of distinction. In spite of another assertion of hers, she had as yet no more occasion to wear a wig than to use a paint pot. Her complexion—very similar to that which her sister Sarah retained to

old age, as was reported by the use of honey water at her toilet—was brilliant as ever; and her blonde hair, though it might have grown a shade darker and be a trifle less luxuriant, was still sufficiently near flaxen in hue, and plentiful enough, to form a striking erection under the pyramid of *cornettes*—stiffly starched, and wired loops of lace with which ladies were beginning to adorn (?) their heads. But after all, these cheeks persistently rosy in their thinness, and that piled-up mass of fair curls above the brow and eyes—along and around which a fine network of lines and curves were being drawn as by a fairy pencil, simply helped to convey the strong suspicion of hardness and sharpness, of bold self-assertion and defiant clutching at what she reckoned her due, which was now a marked feature in Madam Talbot's looks and address. Many thought it a serious detraction from the renowned beauty of the one, and the courtly grace of the other.

To Cherry, the juvenile marriage which had preceded her departure from England was like a far-away dream which might have all but faded out of her mind, had there not remained the solid fact, however unsubstantial all else had turned out, that Peter Thornhurst was a real living person who might cross her path any day. This consideration made just the difference in Cherry's circumstances which marks off a living from a dead sorrow. It could hardly be said that in her case it was hope which kept alive despair, and caused her still to brood pensively at intervals on her youthful espousal and her boy husband. She had long ceased to indulge even the most trembling hope in the matter. It was in fear and affront, and not in womanly pride and yet in dawning expectation, that Cherry kept close to the Talbots' lodging, and never left the company of Frances and her girls during their stay in London. She did not so much as venture, though her faithful heart rebelled at the omission, to go on an independent errand to the Hills'. She only went with Frances on her brief visit to Speedwell Lane, and found that their uncle was bedridden and their aunt forced to "pluck up" health and strength for both. The family were scattered. The old people depended chiefly for help on their soldier son, who was already a major in his Majesty's service, and on young Abigail, who had got a post at court like her cousins before her. To be sure, it was a changed and reformed court; at least, Princess Anne's household, into which Lady Churchill had introduced Abigail, was a model of virtue and discretion, while the princess and Prince George were bulwarks of the Protestant faith and the British constitution.

Cherry dared not risk meeting Peter Thornhurst in any public or private place—she thought if she met him she would die—though for her part she had from the beginning, as soon as he had demanded the renunciation, given up every claim on his liberty. She would fain have laid down his name also, but that would have been impossible in the past without Frances's concur-

rence, and in the present it was difficult to the verge of impossibility, and needed more people than the person principally interested to abjure a title long borne.

Meek as Cherry was, it was not the least part of her punishment on account of an offence for which she was not responsible, to come back to her country and lurk in the background like an evil-doer, because she would never dream of brazening out the misadventure like the principal offender.

The explanation of Frances' supineness in Cherry's affairs after her frequent declarations to the contrary, lies in a nutshell. Her own affairs had latterly engrossed her to the exclusion of every other person's. She had gradually dropped the talk of compelling Peter Thornhurst to acknowledge his wife Cherry. She, Madam Talbot, had come to the conclusion, when she thought at all on a subject of such minor importance, that things were better to remain as they were. In the meanwhile, Cherry had been free to bed and board in her cousin's house all these years. She had been brought up like a gentlewoman—a French gentlewoman to boot. She was still very handsome, handsomer than any of her young cousins, as their mother owned with rare clear-sightedness and magnanimity. Perhaps if all the advantages were gained that were hoped for from King James's accession, it might be a throwing away of Madam Thornhurst to inflict her on the reluctant squire of Three Elms, or to speak more correctly, to inflict him on her. Greater fortunes might be in store for Cherry. It might be better to get her early marriage dissolved, and, after Bess, Fanny and Moll were settled in life, to settle Cherry afresh in a manner more suitable to her attractions and her powerful connections. But there was time enough to think of that; and indeed, Cherry was not destined to meet Peter Thornhurst next in England.

King James, now that he was come to the throne, did not show himself so ready with his largesses and his openly proclaimed preference for old friends and members of his creed as they had fondly anticipated. He had got a considerable fright by the bill of exclusion from the succession which only the royal reprobate Charles's fidelity to his brother's interests had prevented from becoming law. James began by reigning warily, and the episode of the unhappy Monmouth's rebellion, though his uncle punished it relentlessly, served still further to shake the king's nerves; while the queen, Mary of Modena, who had been so humble as a duchess and was so haughty during her brief period of sovereign power, was little likely in her pride of rank, of an unsullied character and a decorous court, to welcome as an addition to her suite what was left of the frolicsome La Belle Jennings, the privileged maid-of-honour of Mary's predecessor, one of the audacious leaders in Charles's exceedingly free and easy court.

However, a good time was coming, when James should have found, or lost his senses, and in the meantime he gave an earnest

of his good-will to his former groom of the chambers. The king appointed Dick general-in-chief of the army in Ireland, in spite of the awkward drawback that, unlike his brother-in-law, he had no knowledge of the science of war. The sole warrant for his competence lay in the cut-throat courage of a duellist, for which he had been notorious in his youth.

Thereupon Frances set out bag-and-baggage for the native country of her first, no less than second, husband, to lay the foundation of her triumphant rule in Dublin. To understand what a journey to Ireland was in those days it is necessary to refer to the adventures of the viceroy and his wife, presumably Lord and Lady Clarendon, when they made the same progress that very year. They were five hours in traversing the fourteen miles between St. Asaph and Conway. The men of the party had to walk from Conway to Beaumaris, while the lady was borne in a litter. Either then or on another occasion about the date referred to, a carriage had to be taken to pieces and carried on peasants' shoulders to the Menai Straits.\* Frances' expedition to York in the train of the duchess, and her voyage to Dieppe were nothing by comparison. It sounds creditable to the general nerves and constitutions of the travellers that they all arrived safe and sound. Frances with her blooming girls, the child Charlotte and their guardian angel Cherry, were hailed with tremendous yells and shouts of applause by the natives. These were half-naked savages trooping out of turf huts, men in long frieze coats, and such of the gentlemen in square-tailed coats much the worse for wear, laced with tarnished gold or silver, as professed the Roman Catholic religion, objected to the deed of settlement confirming to the Protestant Saxons the lands they and their predecessors had won from the original possessors, and agreed in hailing Dick Talbot as their champion and deliverer.

Frances, though she rode rough-shod over the *canaille*, enjoyed being a popular heroine, especially when the distinction landed her in no meaner place than Dublin Castle. There she shared the prestige, and of course quarrelled rousingly with the lady of the Lord-Lieutenant Clarendon—the brother of her old mistress, Anne Hyde, and brother-in-law to the king. There the little lady set about a business which she felt she had too long neglected. She left Dick Talbot to hector and rampage, deprive gallant Protestant officers of their commissions, and replace them by Roman Catholic gentlemen, equally gallant it may be, but no more disciplined to the trade of arms than their chief was. That was Dick's business, which he mismanaged frightfully, and when nobody would believe his frantic protestations and dissembling oaths he would heave his three-cornered hat into the fire, and his wig after it, in proof of his good faith. Let them burn, they were

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\* "Letters of Dorothy Osborne."



the generalissimo's, not his lady's, and the country supplied them. She was not sure that there was not method in his madness. All over England people were setting themselves to sing "Lilliburoo" in derisive hatred of the Irish and their claims. But here beyond St. George's Channel Dick Talbot's name flourished in the chorus of many a national ditty shouted between "sups of potteen" over tables of deal and oak, in farmhouse and hall kitchens, or roared in the teeth of the wild west wind and the thunder of the Atlantic breakers, after drill, among the bogs, or the rocks on the shore.

Dick Talbot could be trusted to mind his own concerns, if not the army's. It was madam's duty to take fortune at its high tide, and marry her daughters in a manner becoming their mother and step-father, as well as to crow over and cow all the fine ladies in Dublin. She did the first with so bare a face and so high a hand that gentlemen over their claret slapped their garters, guffawed and betted on her chances, and ladies over their cards forgot who held "matadore" and who "spadillo," to ask breathlessly what unfortunate victim had succumbed to her open attacks, and to screw up their mouths spitefully at her amazonian tactics. Riders in the Phoenix Park said freely that Madam Talbot charged her husband—a brutal, ungovernable tyrant where others were concerned, but always an obedient servant to her—to bring over a choice of husbands for her daughters on his numerous journeys to and from London.

A little compulsion had to be used, since none of Frances' girls equalled their mother in beauty and wit, as little Sal's daughters were said in days to come to rival their mother. The young Hamiltons could not afford to let slip the season of youth and the first gloss of their French education.

Frances succeeded fairly, making her three elder daughters peeresses before she became a peeress in her own person. Elizabeth was married at the age of nineteen, in 1685, to Lord Rosse. Two years afterwards Frances Hamilton, at the same age, and her sister Mary, in her eighteenth year, were married respectively to Lord Dillon and Lord Kingsland.

"Now, Cousin Cherry, I'll do your job," announced Frances briskly, in the glee of her success on the night of Mary's wedding. "It is your turn at last, since we need not wait for the disposal of little Charley—'better late than never.'"

*(To be continued.)*



## SOCIAL ECHOES.

By MRS. HUMPHRY.

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THE echoes of the early season were all of wedding bells, some faintly sounding from beyond the seas, and others ringing loudly in our ears. The later echoes are all of church bells, this being the Lenten season, when early services and piscatorial dinners are in demand. Those who live very near the churches never quite get the echo of the bells out of their ears. They are wakened by them in the morning, and dream of them at night. To many thousands of us that is all the difference made by Lent. There are more bells, and fish is very dear. Those who attend early services fasting are often extremely pensive throughout the day. The gloom of their thoughts has occasionally been mistaken for a peevish irritability, born of early rising and the rejection of the matinal cup of tea. But no kindly person would willingly interpret thus a sombre eye and silent lip. The owners are probably sunk far in the abysmal depths of their own personality, and will emerge at Easter, "happiest time of all the glad new year." Were it not for the east wind, Easter would be too good for a naughty world. We have all the summer before us, and the sun shines brightly upon us as we ruralize and find primroses and violets and a stray anemone in sheltered corners of the woods. The larks sing above us so loud and so clear that the air seems full of them, and we feel happy in hearing them till we turn some corner and receive a greeting from the east wind full in our faces and lungs. Our climate will never spoil us with any surfeit of good things. It behaves much as Squeers did with his new pupils, whom he knocked off their seats with one hand and on again with the other. Our island atmosphere disables us with heat one day, and almost freezes us the next. It behaves like a shrewish step-mother, but perhaps we enjoy her rare smiling moods all the more intensely for the habitual frown she wears.

The season, with its pictures, its concerts, its functions, royal, social and professional, lies all before us where to choose, and though we never accomplish half of what we mean to do, we yet enjoy the busy days as they flit by. The coming season is likely to be an interesting one in various ways, and if only the weather be not so gloomy and forbidding as it was throughout the whole of last year's spring and summer, we may have a very good time. The long grey days of last season were depressing enough to spoil anything. Who will ever forget the poor Silver Fête, with its leaden skies and cataracts of anything but silver rain? The mud about the balloon was such as to make a deep impression upon the memory. It was like that with all the *fêtes* and functions of 1888.

May the "odd number" of the present season bring with it its proverbial luck!

In matters dramatic we are well off in anticipation. By the time these lines appear, the new play by Mrs. Arthur Stannard (John Strange Winter) will have been played at a *matinée* by a strong cast, and the public will have given its verdict upon the successor of the very successful "Bootles' Baby."

Mr. Jones has taken as the motto of his new play, "Matt Ruddock," soon to be produced at the Haymarket, these lovely lines from Thomas Dekker's song, "The Happy Heart:"

Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?  
     O sweet content.  
 Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed?  
     O punishment.  
 Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed  
 To add to golden numbers golden numbers?  
     O sweet content!

Mr. and Mrs. Beerbohm Tree are to play the principal parts, which have been specially written for them. It is always a pleasure to see how a new part is thoughtfully treated and skilfully worked out by this artistic and intellectual couple. Mr. Conway, Mr. Weedon Grossmith and Miss Rose Norreys are all to play in the new piece, the present date fixed for its production being Easter Monday. The scenes are laid in London, and money-making is to be the subject, treated from the point of view which Ruskin had in his mind when he suggested that "the breakers (in a certain picture) might have more humanity in them."

With Mr. and Mrs. Kendal at the Court, in a play by Mr. Pinero, those who love to be made to cry must be happy. This gentleman, who is now our chief dramatist, has finished his new play for Mr. Hare, and to it all dramatic and cultivated London is looking forward with pleased expectation. The cast is a very strong one, including Mr. John Hare himself, Mr. Sidney Brough and Miss Kate Rorke.

The unfortunate Olympic Theatre has dragged yet another victim into bankruptcy, in the person of Miss Agnes Hewitt. When Shakespeare makes Cæsar say, "I like to have men about me that are fat;" and again, "That Cassius hath a lean and hungry look;" I am sure the dramatist meant by "fat" a prosperous and lucky man, and expressed the reverse of this in the adjectives he applied to Cassius. The people who are bent on getting on in the world, ought carefully to avoid unlucky persons and unlucky places. Of course, no one believes in luck, as such, an adventitious quality that cannot be logically accounted for. But on the other hand, there cannot be the very smallest doubt that there *are* lucky individuals whose success in life cannot be entirely attributed to their wisdom and knowledge of affairs; and that others are just as consistently unfortunate in all their undertakings as the first are happy. It is as well to be guided by this

certain, though mysterious, quality. I know a stockbroker who would not dream of taking shares in any company in which a notoriously unlucky man had invested. The most tempting speculation fails to attract him when "Jonah," as he calls him, "is in the same ship." Unfortunately the latter is not always unlucky. If he were, he would be worth his weight in gold to other men, as a kind of human sign-post, to point out dangerous undertakings.

The Olympic Theatre has ruined many people, each of whom has had a natural confidence in their own power to "change the luck" of the unprosperous building. Will any one have the courage to try again? If not, it would be an excellent house for the Salvation Army, being situated in the very heart of the densely populated district of Drury Lane.

Mr. Wilson Barrett's play, "Nowadays," at the Princess's Theatre, has given him a foremost place among our dramatists, or perhaps I ought to say "melodramatists." The moral is excellent, but not unduly obtruded, and the author plays the principal part in his usual picturesque manner.

Mr. E. J. Lonnen takes his benefit on All Fools' Day, a date which he emphasizes with much seriousness in his advertisements. Though particulars of the performance are not yet announced, there is no rashness in predicting that it is certain to be an excellent one, with plenty of fun in it.

Among the new and popular songs is a beautiful one by Mr. Hamish MacCunn, the young Scotch composer, who has lately made such a name for himself in the musical world. The title is "The Ash Tree," and the words, written by Mr. Thomas Davidson, are exquisitely pathetic, especially when sung. They run as follows :

There grows an ash by my bow'r door,  
And a' its boughs are buskit braw,  
In fairest weeds o' simmer green,  
And birds sit singin' on them a'.  
Oh, cease your sangs, ye blithesome birds,  
And o' your liltin' let me be;  
Ye bring deid simmers frae their graves  
To weary me.

There grows an ash by my bow'r door,  
And a' its boughs are clad in snaw,  
The ice-drap hings at ilka twig,  
And soft the nor' wind soughs thro' a'.  
Oh, cease thy mane, thou nor'lan' wind,  
And o' your wailing let me be;  
Ye bring deid winters frae their graves  
To weary me.

I wad fain forget them a',  
Remember'd good but deepens ill,  
As gleids o' licht far seen by nicht  
Mak the near mirk but mirker still.  
Then silent be, thou dear auld tree,  
O' a' thy voices, let me be;  
Ye bring the deid years frae their graves  
To weary me.